THE STORY OF THE JONES HOUSE IN PONTIAC, ILLINOIS

by

Dale C. Maley

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The Story of the Jones House in Pontiac, Illinois

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Foreword

John Dehner was very successful in the early portion of his life. He was worth $936,000 in today's dollars by 1860. He established and ran a very successful dry goods mercantile business in Pontiac. He served in Livingston County government offices including serving as Township Supervisor for four years. He helped to build the first Livingston County Jail. John Dehner served as an officer in the early Livingston County Fairs.

John Dehner tried to improve Pontiac by successfully getting the Chicago & Paducah as a second railroad for the county. He tried but was unsuccessful in getting a new state mental asylum to be built in Pontiac.

Judge Henry Jones and his son, Henry C. Jones, both led successful lives. Henry Jones ran a successful business in Pontiac. Henry Jones helped build the first bridge over the Vermilion River in 1847. He was elected a County Commissioner in 1848. In 1851, Henry Jones and Henry Loveless laid out the town of Richmond, just east of Pontiac. Unfortunately the railroad missed Richmond by just two miles, and Richmond became a ghost town.

Henry Jones and his business partner, Edwin Charles Jones, built the first brick structure in Livingston County around 1856 at 315 W. Howard Street. Henry Jones was elected to be a Livingston County Judge. After making three journeys to the California gold fields, Judge Henry Jones stayed in California. He became a pioneer settler in Shasta, California.

Henry C. Jones was involved with several businesses including the Pontiac Sentinel newspaper, the first electric light plant in Pontiac, and the first artificial ice company in Pontiac. He also lived in Texas and sold supplies to many different newspapers.

Henry C. Jones eventually married and moved into the Jones House around 1900. His father, Judge Henry Jones helped to build the first brick structure in Pontiac around 1856, and his son, Henry C. Jones lived in the oldest brick house in Pontiac built in 1858.

Unfortunately, the oldest brick structure in Livingston County that Henry Jones built at 315 W. Howard St. was torn down in 1989.

The oldest brick house in Pontiac at 314 E. Madison Street was severely damaged by a major fire in 1975. This house was saved from the wrecking ball when Francis E. Leman and Reid Tombaugh bought the house in 1976. Through the efforts and donations from countless citizens, the Jones House was fully restored. Every year, many residents and visitors enjoy touring this fascinating pre-Civil War brick home.

It is hoped this book will help to inform future generations about the history of the Jones House and the families that lived in it.

Acknowledgments

Many thanks go to the Livingston County Historical Society for allowing access to the Jones House and the records of the historical society.

Thanks go to the current docents at the Jones House, including Brenda Thompson, Ron Baker and his wife, Fawn Baker, for reviewing and offering suggestions for the book manuscript.

Thanks to Marcia Cox of the Livingston County Historical Society for reviewing the manuscript.

John Perring, son of John Perring, the Chairman of the Jones House Restoration Committee, also reviewed the manuscript.

Many thanks go to Gayle Martinson, Librarian, at the Wisconsin Historical Society Library Archives. She found a book titled ***The Bartine Family of Marshall, Iowa***, which has information about John Dehner and his wife's family.

Thanks also go to the staff at the old Courthouse in Pontiac, Illinois. They allowed me to research the old property tax records in the southwest corner of the basement in the courthouse.

Thanks go to Pearle Sutherland (1895-1989) for saving photographs and newspaper clippings in one of her scrapbooks. Copies of some of her photographs were used to write this book. Her scrapbooks are in the archives of the Livingston County Historical Society.

Many thanks go to Judith K. Wells for proofreading the manuscript.

Tom Ewing also reviewed the book manuscript and offered improvement suggestions.

CHAPTER 1

Book Design

There are four primary historical reference books used whenever research is performed about Livingston County, Illinois.

1878 History Book

The earliest published reference to Livingston County, Illinois history is William Le Baron's 1878 book titled ***The History of Livingston County, Illinois.*** This book will be called the 1878 history book in future references.

1888 History Book

The 1888 history book titled ***Portrait and Biographical Album of Livingston County*** by Chapman Brothers is the second Livingston County history book. This book will be called the 1888 history book in future references.

1900 History Book

The 1900 history book titled ***The Biographical Record of Livingston and Woodford Counties*** by S. J. Clarke is the third Livingston County history book. This book will be called the 1900 history book in future references.

1909 History Book

The 1909 history book titled ***Historical Encyclopedia of Illinois and History of Livingston County Volume Two*** by Bateman and Selby is the fourth Livingston County history book. This book will be called the 1909 history book in future references.

Other Important Historical Sources

The Fairbury Blade has now been digitized and is word searchable back to 1871. Access to the Blade archives is free and available from the Dominy Memorial Library website. There were also other newspapers published in Fairbury between its founding in 1857 and 1871. Unfortunately, no copies of these early newspapers exist.

The Pontiac Sentinel was published from 1857 until about 1900. The Pontiac Library microfilm only goes back to 1871. As of February 16, 2024, the Pontiac Library has made the 1871 to 1897 issues of the Sentinel available online to library cardholders.

The Daily Leader has been around since 1896. The Pontiac Library also has made it available online to library cardholders.

For non-members of the Pontiac Library, they can come to the library and use a designated desktop computer to search both the Sentinel and the Daily Leader free of charge.

The website GenealogyBank.com requires an annual subscription fee to access the archived articles. This website has archived copies of the Daily Leader from 1958 to 1970.

The website Ancestry.com requires an annual subscription fee to access the archived newspaper articles. This website has archived copies of the Daily Leader from 1971 to 1977.

The Bloomington Pantagraph newspaper archives are also available online and can be searched back to 1838. There is an annual subscription fee required to access these archives.

Newspapers.com is a website that contains archives of thousands of newspapers. Annual subscription fees are required to access these archives.

Google Books was also an invaluable source for old books with information about the Dehner and Jones families. NOTE: You must utilize the Google Book option to find these books. The regular Google search feature does not readily identify these old publications.

Citations

If possible, references and dates will be noted for all materials used in this book. In the event no date is available, that fact will be noted.

Sanborn Maps

The Sanborn Insurance Company periodically made maps of many small towns in Central Illinois. Sanborn maps still exist for Pontiac in the years of 1888, 1892, 1897,

1903, 1910, and 1923. Copies of these old maps are available for free from several different websites.

Newspaper Stories

All newspaper stories cited in this book will be presented in the original wording of the article. If the copy of the article had adequate quality, it may be shown as an image. If the article is of poor visual quality, it will be transcribed into text.

Pantagraph Negatives

Starting a few years ago, the Pantagraph released their old photo negatives to the McLean County Museum of History. The museum has the negative scanned and then posted on a website where anyone can access them for free. Negatives from the Pontiac area can be accessed at https://tinyurl.com/37x62cvx. Negatives that were used in this book will be referred to as "Pantagraph negatives."

Hopefully, as the Pantagraph continues to release their old negatives, more old photos related to the Jones House will become available in future years.

Archive.Org

Most of the rare documents discovered in researching this book have been uploaded to Archive.Org. Hopefully, this website will survive for many years in the future, and future researchers can easily find this material.

John Dehner the Actor

When performing Internet searches for John Dehner information, the search results are often for John Dehner, the famous actor. Wikipedia has a biography for the actor John Dehner.

> John Dehner (DAY-ner) (1915-1992) was an American stage, radio, film, and television actor. From the late 1930s to the late 1980s, he amassed a long list of performance credits, often in roles as sophisticated con men, shady authority figures, and other smooth-talking villains. His credits just in feature films, televised series, and in made-for-TV movies number almost 300 productions.
>
> Dehner worked extensively as a radio actor during the latter half of that medium's "golden age," accumulating hundreds of additional credits on nationally broadcast series.

His most notable starring role was as Paladin on the radio version of the television Western Have Gun – Will Travel, which aired for 106 episodes on CBS from 1958 to 1960. He continued to work as a voice actor in film, such as narrating the film The Hallelujah Trail. Earlier in his career, Dehner also worked briefly for Walt Disney Studios, serving as an assistant animator from 1940 to March 1941 at the company's facilities in Burbank, California.

John Dehner the movie actor.

Difficulty with the Judge Henry Jones Family

The three most important men involved with the Jones House history were John Dehner (1807-1880), Judge Henry Jones (1810-1893), and the son of Judge Henry Jones, Henry C. Jones (1838-1921). Because the father's name and the son's name are so similar, it is difficult to sometimes tell which of the two men is being referred to in historical information. If it can not be determined which Henry Jones is being referred to in historical text, it will be noted in the book.

Separating the Two Key Families

The two most significant families in the story of the Jones House are the John Dehner family and the Judge Henry Jones family. To make it easier for the reader, their stories will be told in separate chapters versus mixing the two families together in the same chapters.

Partial Title Abstract for Jones House

The Livingston County Historical Society has a copy of the Abstract from 1905 through 1977. This abstract has been scanned and converted to a PDF file. This partial abstract has been uploaded to Archive.org and can be viewed or downloaded at https://tinyurl.com/yc6zar8v.

This abstract will be called the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract in future references.

Completing the Title Abstract for Jones House

The partial abstract only covers the period from 1905 to 1977. A complete abstract would cover from about 1840 when Henry Weed bought the land from the government until 1977. Both title companies in Pontiac were asked to give quotes for the cost of completing the abstract. Neither company responded with quotes.

In theory, one could create the missing 1840 to 1905 abstract by manually going through the sales records books in the old courthouse. This would be a difficult and time consuming process. Some of this work was done previously by Robert Schlosser and others.

The old property tax records helped to identify who owned and paid the taxes on the Jones House by year. Because of the difficulty and time required to complete the abstract, the author chose not to undertake this study. It is likely the results of completing the abstract would not significantly change the over-all story of the Jones House.

Old Property Tax Records

These records are in the southwest corner of the basement in the Historic Courthouse in Pontiac, Illinois.

To utilize these records, you must know the city name, block number and lot number for the property you want to research.

These books start in 1854 and you can search to see who paid the property taxes each year by Block number and Lot number in a village.

Bound books by year of property tax records in Historic Courthouse in Pontiac

It is fairly easy to search these records, but the names of the taxpayers are written in longhand and sometimes can not be deciphered.

Use of AI (Artificial Intelligence) in Writing This Book

The author recently tried using ChatGPT for historical research. In the first case, the software wrote a beautiful biography about the person, who died in 1893. The only problem was that out of ten facts mentioned in the biography, every single fact was wrong!!

So, no AI was used to research or write this book.

1984 to 1987 Livingston County Historical Society Newsletters

During that era, Robert Schlosser, President of the Historical Society, published periodic newsletters and sent them to Society members. The newsletter was called the ***Update***. At the end of 1987, Mr. Schlosser compiled the three years of newsletters into one paper document.

A paper copy of this document was found in October 2023 when searching the Jones House to try to find any paperwork that might be helpful in writing this book. This 29 page compilation was scanned into a computer and a PDF file was created. This file was

uploaded to Archive.Org by the author. A copy of this file can be viewed or downloaded at https://tinyurl.com/2s3zrbp7.

Several of the newsletters have history about the Jones House. Unfortunately, some of these articles had errors, because further research found errors in the previous research. The information below appeared in the October 24, 1985, issue of the newsletter.

> As research of the subject (the Jones House) continued and more information was gathered, the text of the talk was further revised and it is now identified as the June 1985 Version of GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE. The booklet of nine pages is priced at $1.25 per copy.
>
> Source material gathered but not used in the Talk Program should not remain unused, therefore an APPENDIX has been started. APPENDIX, Part One, for GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE was released in September. It has 16 pages and carries a price of $1.75 per copy.

1985 Schlosser Booklets on the Jones House

The archives of the Livingston County Historical Society were searched by the author in October 2023. Both booklets note above that were written by Robert Schlosser in 1985 were found in storage boxes.

The June 1985 Version of ***GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE*** booklet is 12 pages long. The September version of the ***APPENDIX, Part One, for GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE*** is 18 pages long.

Both booklets were scanned and PDF files of the booklets were created. These two PDF files were upload to Archive.org in October of 2023. The main booklet can be accessed athttps://tinyurl.com/bdcn87ut and the Appendix can be accessed at https://tinyurl.com/3sm3bbf9.

The two booklets are too long to include every page in this book. There are only a few subtle differences in the information in these booklets compared to the research done for this book. These subtle differences do not significantly change the over-all story of the Jones House.

Pearle Sutherland Scrapbooks

Around 1981, Pearle began the assembly of scrapbooks to document Livingston County history. Boxes of her scrapbooks were found in the archives of the Livingston County Historical Society in October 2023. She prepared one on the history of the Historical Society and included paper newspaper clippings of Daily Leader stories about the Jones House restoration project. Digital scans of some of her clipping were used to produce better photographs for use in this book.

1971 New York Times Article Featuring Francis E. Lehman of Pontiac

The New York Times newspaper hardly ever publishes an article about Pontiac or Livingston County. This article was found when researching Francis E. Lehman. Although it is not directly associated with the Jones House, the article does give a flavor of what life was like in Pontiac in the 1970s. Because of this, the author made the decision to include the article in this book.

Book Font

This book is written in Times New Roman with a 12 point font size. This relatively large font size makes all parts of the book easy to read.

Chronological Chapters

This book is designed in chronological order to make it easier to follow the story of the Jones House and its occupants.

CHAPTER 2

The 1790 to 1868 John Dehner Era

John Dehner Family History

Samuel Mooney was born on December 11, 1790, in Ohio. Jane Jones was born in 1799 in Kentucky. Samuel Mooney married Jane Jones around 1818 in Ohio. Samuel was 27 and Jane was 19 years of age when they married. Samuel and Jane Mooney had nine children. Unfortunately, Samuel Mooney died on April 5, 1836 at the age of 45 in Carroll County, Indiana.

When her husband died, Jane Mooney was 37 years old. Jane's children and their ages when Samuel Mooney died are shown below.

Malinda	22
Jonas	19
Mary	19
Rebecca	17
Nancy	14
John	11
Obediah	8
Peter	5
Susan	5

Widow Jane Mooney had to raise six children under the age of 18 when her husband died. Eight months after her husband died, Jane Mooney married John Dehner. John was born in 1807 in Prussia. John Dehner emigrated from Prussia to Indiana in 1835. In 1871, Prussia became part of Germany.

On December 13, 1836, John Dehner married the widow Jane Mooney in Carroll County, Indiana. John was 29 and Jane was 37 years of age when they married.

Genealogy Book with John Dehner and Jane Jones Information

Using a Google book search, a book was found with information about John Dehner and his wife Jane Jones. The title of this book is ***The Bartine Family of Marshall County, Iowa***. Excerpts from this book are shown below.

Chapter 2
The Mooney Family

The Mooney family origin in America appears to go back to the New Jersey and eastern Pennsylvania area probably in the early 1700's. There is an old note which says that the family came from the Isle of Man and from Ireland and Scotland. I have not found any proof of this and include it only to help further research.

The first member of the family we have any record of is Joseph Mooney who was born October 19, 1768, probably in New Jersey. He died in Miami County, Ohio, on September 13, 1801 or 1807, but the old records are hard to make out. It is more likely 1807. On August 18, 1785, he married Rebecca Freeman who was born May 30, 1769, probably in New Jersey, and she died May 9, 1815, in Miami County, Ohio. The records indicate they left New Jersey and settled in Fayette County, Pennsylvania, before they moved to Miami County, Ohio.

The children of Joseph Mooney and Rebecca Freeman Mooney are:

Rebecca Mooney - b July 31, 1786
m Joseph Jones August 16, 1804

John F. Mooney - b September 26, 1788
m Nancy Terry December 31, 1811
d October 21, 1855

Samuel Mooney - b November 10, 1790 (PA?)
m Jane Jones
d April 4, 1836

Priscilla Mooney - b October 24, 1791
m Joseph Jones August 25, 1809

Ruth Mooney - b January 25, 1795
m William McJimsey April 25, 1811

Nathan F. Mooney - b January 6, 1798

Elizabeth Mooney - b July 29, 1799
m Samuel Moore December 21, 1820

Lewis Mooney - b February 2, 1801
Thomas J. Mooney - b abt 1807

The family seemed to have settled in Ohio prior to 1800 and in Monroe Township of Miami County, Ohio, by 1816. The Mooney, Terry, and Freeman families and probably the Jenkins and Jones families all appear in the area of Monroe Township.

Samuel Mooney, the son of Joseph Mooney, moved with his family to Miami County, Ohio, and probably married there, but I have not found a record of his marriage to Jane Jones. He owned real estate there, but he appears to have lost it to foreclosure as a Sheriff's Deed filed November 5, 1824, in Book 5, page 250 of the Recorder's Office, Miami County, Ohio shows "Samuel Mooney by Sheriff conveys to William Barbee Land in Section 26, Township 4, Range 6 Monroe Township, Miami County, Ohio."

The family of Samuel Mooney (Grandpa Samuel Mooney's grandfather) moved to Delphi, Carroll County, Indiana, about 1830. This was the frontier and was just beginning to be settled. The land records (Book C, p234 Recorder, Carroll County, Indiana) show a patent to Samuel Mooney for the East Half of the Southeast Quarter of Section 4, Township 23 North, Range 2 West, Carroll County, Indiana, dated January 26, 1831. The land is located in the western part of the county on Wildcat Creek.

Samuel Mooney was born November 10, 1790, probably in Pennsylvania and died in Carroll County, Indiana, on April 5, 1836. He is buried in Pyrmont Cemetery (Row 32, Sec. A) Clay Township, Carroll County, Indiana. His tombstone, which is very legible and in good shape, says "age 15 yr., 4 mon., 25 days". This appears to be an error and should read "45 yrs". I have checked several sources and he does not appear to be a veteran of the War of 1812.

I have not found any record or date of his marriage to Jane Jones, but the various probate and guardianship records indicate she was his wife. The 1850 census of Washington Township, Tippecanoe County, Indiana, indicates she was 52 years old and born in Kentucky about 1797-1799.

After Samuel's death, she married John Dehner (born in Germany about 1806). She died October 10, 1879, in the Carthage, Missouri, area. Jane Jones Mooney and John Dehner were the parents of a son, Joseph Dehner born January 29, 1840, near or in Americus, Tippecanoe County, Indiana.

John Dehner was a prosperous farmer and businessman in this area of Indiana.

The records show that John Dehner entered land November 18, 1835; May 30, 1836; and April 9, 1836, in Sections 9, 19 and 34, Township 24 North, Range 2 West - this would be in Madison Township, Carroll County and would be just north of Samuel Mooney's land. John and Jane Mooney Dehner moved to Pontiac, Illinois, where he purchased land about 1857.

John and Jane Mooney Dehner's son, Joseph, appears to have had financial problems and misfortunes. They later moved to the Carthage, Missouri, area where Jane died. John Dehner lost his money and died September 24, 1880, in Pierce City, Missouri. I have not located Jane's grave, but believe it could be in the Parke Cemetery near Carthage because Joseph's wife died in 1882 and she and several of his children and grandchildren are buried there.

The children of Samuel Mooney and Jane Jones are:

Rebecca Mooney - b Miami County, Ohio.

Her first marriage, I believe, was to a Logan and her second marriage on August 13, 1835, in Carrot County, Indiana was to Moses Campbell

Malinda Mooney - b abt 1814 Ohio
d abt 1853 Marshall County, Indiana
m Henry Jenkins August 13, 1835, Carroll County, Indiana - he died 1845, m Henry Van Noy February 24, 1847, Carroll County, Indiana

Jonas C. Mooney - b November 3, 1817, Miami County, Ohio
d September 25, 1876, Hillsdale, Barron County, Wisconsin

John Edward (Edmund) Mooney
b April 12, 1825, Ohio

Obediah Mooney - b May 25, 1828, Ohio d May 3, 1897, Carroll County, Indiana

Susan Mooney - b October 13, 1831, Indiana d July 15, 1856, Carroll County, Indiana

Probate Record (Carroll County) Book 1, pages 47 and 130, dated May 9, 1836, shows Jane Mooney and Henry Jenkins were administrators of the Estate of Samuel Mooney. In February 1837, Jane Mooney resigned.

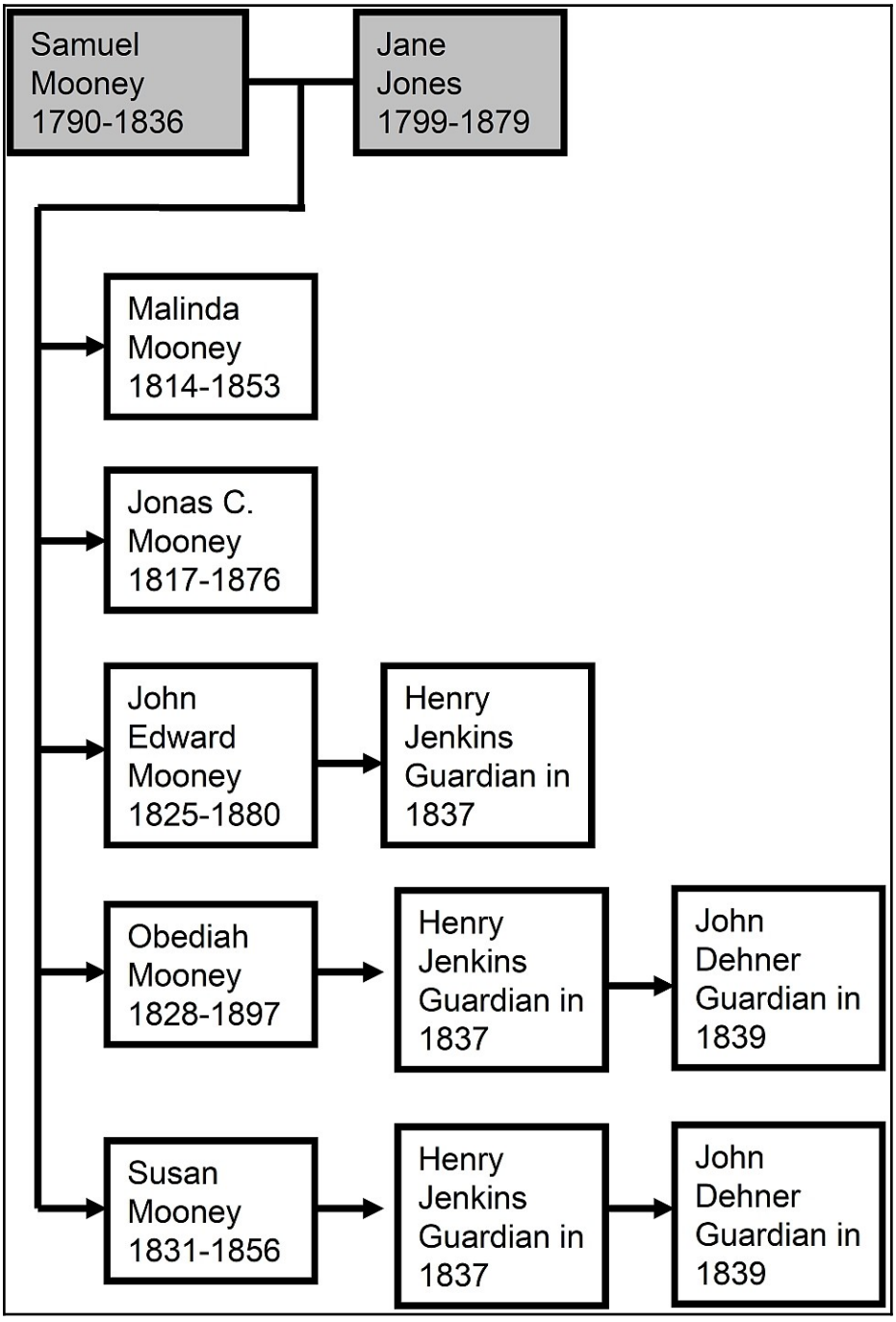
In May of 1837, Henry Jenkins was guardian of John Edward (Edmund) Mooney, age 12 and Obediah C. Mooney, age 9, minor heirs of Samuel (Mooney). On February 2, 1839, John Dehner was the guardian of Obediah and Susan. John Edward (Edmund) Mooney's name does not appear after that date and he is not in the 1840 census. He married Mary Jane Beard and they lived in Marshall County, Indiana.

Obediah Mooney was born in 1828 in Ohio and served in the Mexican War. On February 19, 1849, he married Catherine Enoch (b March 30, 1825, in Miami, Ohio, d February 9, 1913 near Cutler, Indiana). Obediah died May 3, 1897. They are both buried in the Enoch Cemetery located in SE 1/4 Sec. 6, north side of road in pines about 80 rods north of building site. They were members of the M.E. Church in Mt. Olive, Indiana, on October 19, 1879. Their children were Jonas, Alice G., William H., Hilda H., Emma, Miranda E. Premer, Elizabeth L. Ball, and John E. Mooney of San Antonio, Texas.

Susan Mooney died July 15, 1856, and is buried near Samuel in the Pyrmont Cemetery located 0.1 mile west of 800 w along 5505 center of Sec. 6 on the west edge of the town of Pyrmont. Her stone says she was age 21 yrs., 9 mos., 2 days, but this does not agree on all records with her date of birth. There is a small stone about 2 inches thick, 8 inches wide and 18 inches long, but without any visible marking between the graves of Samuel and Susan.

Family Tree of Samuel Mooney and Jane Jones

Ancestry.com shows that Samuel and Jane Mooney had ten children. The book ***The Bartine Family of Marshall County, Iowa***, reports they had five children. Assuming the data is more accurate from the Bartine family book, a family tree was constructed and it is shown below.


Samuel Mooney 1790-1836
Jane Jones 1799-1879
Malinda Mooney 1814-1853
Jonas C. Mooney 1817-1876
John Edward Mooney 1825-1880
Henry Jenkins Guardian in 1837
Obediah Mooney 1828-1897
Henry Jenkins Guardian in 1837
John Dehner Guardian in 1839
Susan Mooney 1831-1856
Henry Jenkins Guardian in 1837
John Dehner Guardian in 1839

John Dehner Indiana Land Purchases

According to the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Land Management online database, John Dehner purchased seven different tracts of land in Carroll County, Indiana, in 1837 and 1838. These land purchases totaled 600 acres and he paid cash for the land as opposed to using military veteran land patents.

Names	Date	Doc #	State	Meridian	Twp - Rng	Aliquots	Sec. #	County
DEHNER, JOHN	3/30/1837	26358	IN	2nd PM	024N - 002W	SE¼	34	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	3/30/1837	26359	IN	2nd PM	024N - 002W	E½SW¼	34	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	3/30/1837	26361	IN	2nd PM	023N - 002W	S½NW¼	9	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	5/15/1837	28593	IN	2nd PM	024N - 002W	E½NE¼	34	Carroll
					024N - 002W	NW¼SW¼	34	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	5/15/1837	29115	IN	2nd PM	023N - 002W	W½SW¼	10	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	5/15/1837	29116	IN	2nd PM	023N - 002W	NE¼SE¼	9	Carroll
DEHNER, JOHN	9/10/1838	30383	IN	2nd PM	024N - 001W	SW¼SE¼	31	Carroll

1840 Census

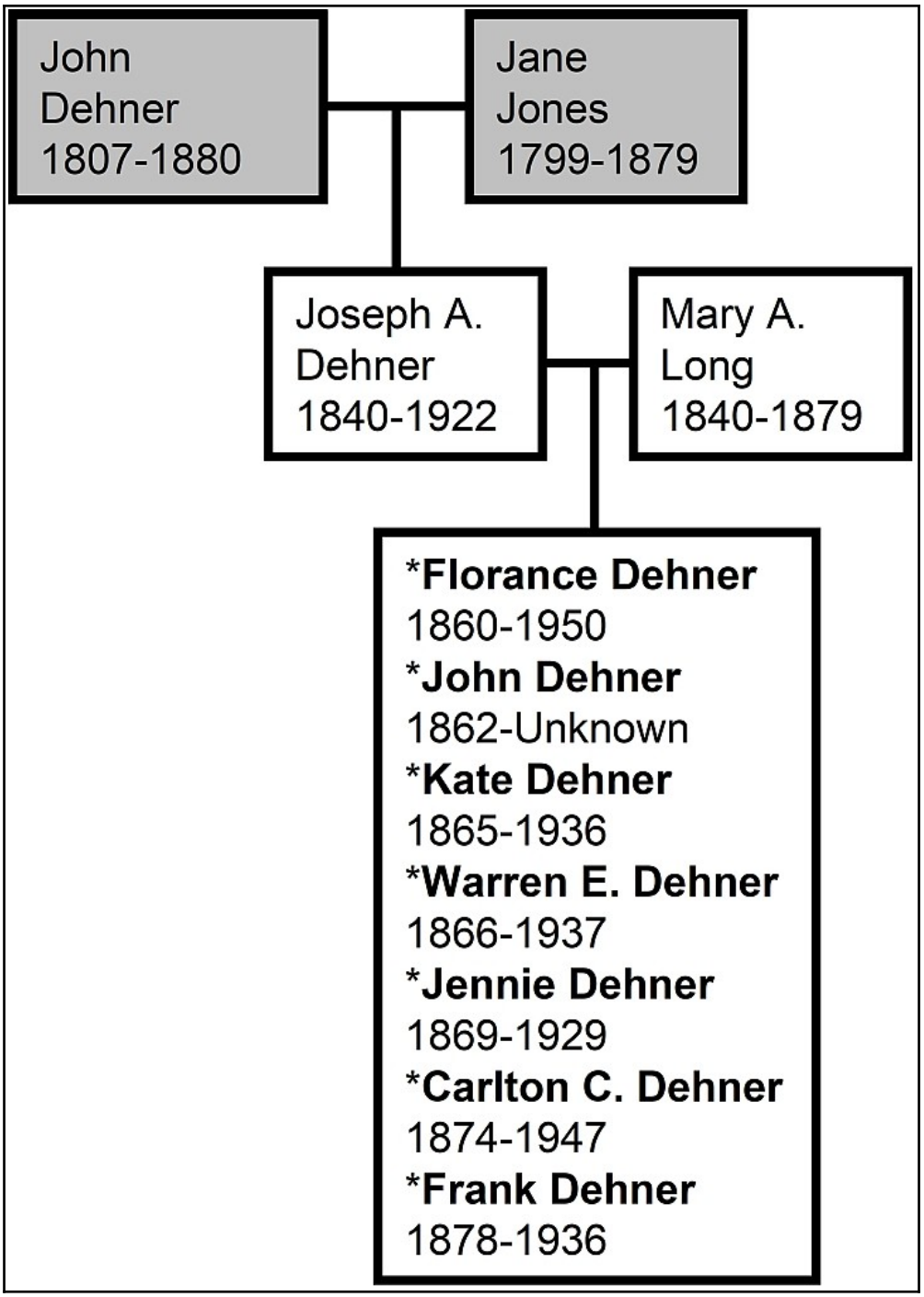
In 1840, John and Jane Dehner had a son they named Joseph A. Dehner in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. John Dehner was shown in the 1840 U.S. Census. In his household of five people, there was one male under age five, one male between ten and fourteen, and one female between ages five and nine. His family was living in Tippecanoe County, Indiana. John was 33 and Jane was 41 when their son was born.

1850 Census

In the 1850 U.S. Census, the John Dehner family still lived in Tippecanoe County. Son Joseph Dehner was eleven years old and lived at home. John Dehner gave his occupation as selling gold. The only child in the household was Joseph Dehner.

John Dehner Family Tree

After the children of Samuel Mooney and Jane Jones left the John Dehner household, the family tree of John Dehner and Jane Jones is shown below.



First Livingston County Fair Held in 1850

The 1878 history book recounts the history and development of the Livingston County Fair.

> **THE LIVINGSTON COUNTY AGRICULTURAL ASSOCIATION.**
>
> The earliest attempts at popular exhibitions of the agricultural and mechanical products of the county were held about the year 1850, in the Court House Square. The principal mover in these exhibitions was Mr. Samuel Ladd. But few articles were exhibited; and at the close of the day's entertainment, a hat was passed around to raise means to defray expenses.
>
> These primitive fairs generally went by the name of "rope fairs," from the fact that a rope was stretched around the articles shown. These fairs were held at irregular intervals until 1856, when at a meeting of several gentlemen interested in the subject, a permanent organization was effected.
>
> This meeting was held at the Court House, on, Jan. 5, 1856, at which meeting Wm. J. Murphy was chosen Chairman. and James Stout, Secretary. A Constitution was submitted and adopted, and the following officers elected at said meeting : William J. Murphy, President; M. D. Edgington, Vice President; C. B. Ostrander, Vice President; S. McCormick, Vice President; Otis Richardson, Secretary; James Stout, Corresponding Secretary; James M. Perry, Treasurer.
>
> The first County Fair was held in the Fall of 1856, in the Court House Square in Pontiac. No admission fee was charged and a very small list of premiums offered.
>
> On the 18th day of April, 1857, the Board reorganized, and a Constitution was adopted. Section 1 of the Constitution provided that this society shall be called "The Livingston County Agricultural Society." Its objects shall be to improve the condition of agriculture, horticulture, mechanic and household arts. Also, that this Board shall consist of such persons as shall pay into the treasury not less than $1.00 and $1.00 annually thereafter. The payment of $20 or more shall constitute a life member of this society.
>
> The officers of this Board shall consist of a President, a Vice President, a Secretary, a Treasurer and a Board of nine Directors (five of whom shall constitute a quorum).
>
> Under this organization twenty fairs were held, with a very good attendance at each. The result has been a growing interest in agricultural, horticultural and mechanical pursuits.

In 1865, the society purchased the old fair grounds, south of the Vermilion River, which they furnished with buildings, stalls and a good half-mile track, and which were occupied until the present season.

In 1872, the Legislature passed a law changing the State Agricultural Society to the State Agricultural Board, and giving it certain privileges. The same act provided that any County Agricultural Society forming an organization in compliance with this law would be entitled to $100 each season a fair was held.

That year, the Livingston County Agricultural Society changed to the Livingston County Agricultural Board, in compliance with this law, and continued under that organization and name until Jan. 1, 1878. At this date, it was decided to form a stock company, sell the old grounds, purchase new and more desirable grounds and extend the aim and purpose of the society. One thousand shares at $10 each were decided upon and readily disposed of, thereby creating a fund of $10,000. This is used in part to defray expenses, insure payment of premiums and to supply any deficiency that may occur.

The grounds comprise fifty-five acres southeast of the city on the bank of the river. One-third of the grounds are admirably shaded, affording a pleasant retreat. A most excellent one-half-mile track is graded and ready for use. Good buildings, stables ·and other necessary adjuncts will be at once erected, so that by the Fall meeting-first week of September-every thing will be in readiness. The premiums offered aggregate $3,000, and an excellent exhibition is anticipated.

The present officers of the association are as follows: President, W.O. Burleigh; Vice President, Bailey A. Gower; Secretary, A. W. Kellogg; Treasurer, D. C. Eylar; Executive Committee, J. P. Houston, W. P. Corbin, A. E. Sweet, James Marks, C. W. Ament.

A Director from each township in the county is elected by the stockholders for three years. These Directors are divided into three classes, one class going out each year.

First Railroad in Pontiac

The 1878 history book recounts that the first railroad in Livingston County was the Chicago & Mississippi Railroad with tracks running through Pontiac in 1854. This railroad changed names to the Chicago & Alton Railroad and it spurred huge growth in the Pontiac area.

John Dehner Family Moves to Pontiac

Sometime between 1850 and 1857, the John Dehner family moved from Tippecanoe County, Indiana, to Pontiac, Illinois. According to the old property tax records in the basement of the Historic Courthouse, John Dehner purchased the land in Block 51 Lot 2 of the original village of Pontiac. This lot was later assigned the street address of 314 E. Madison St. in Pontiac. A spreadsheet showing the property tax records is shown below.

Year	Block No.	Lot No.	Address	Common Name	Taxpayer	Value	Total Tax
1854	51	2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Fellows Value??	$750.00	$6.70
1855	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Stevens?	$40.00	NA
1856	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Simon DeWitt	$40.00	$0.47
1857	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	John Dehner	$100.00	$1.67
1858	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	John Dehner Paid	$366.00	$4.98
1859	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	John Dehner	$300.00	$5.38
1860	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	John Dehner	$300.00	$5.16
1861	51	1+2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	John Dehner	$600.00	$9.70

According to the property tax records shown above, John Dehner purchased the lot from Simon DeWitt in 1857. It is hard to read the handwriting, so it was likely Simeon DeWitt, not Simon DeWitt.

These property tax records also show a huge increase in the value of the property at this site from $40 in 1856 to $366 in 1858. This data indicates that John Dehner built a house on this lot in 1857 and 1858.

Simeon DeWitt Was Early Livingston County Lawyer

According to the 1909 history book, he was an early lawyer in Pontiac.

> Simeon DeWitt was another of the pioneer attorneys of Livingston County, arriving in Pontiac in 1854 from the state of Pennsylvania. Mr. DeWitt was an able lawyer. He built the first house on the south side of

the river at the comer of South Mill and West Reynolds streets, where he died in 1860.

Mr. Fellows and Mr. Stevens

Because the handwriting is almost illegible, it is hard to determine the exact two names of these gentlemen. The 1878 history book gives a brief summary of these two families in early Pontiac history.

> It will, doubtless, be entertaining to any having a real estate interest in the town of Pontiac, to follow, for a little distance, the chain of title of the lands which they now occupy, and which, as we have seen, were primarily vested by right of preemption in Weed and the two Youngs. The three men were originally equally interested in the town site, and in some of the adjoining lands; but, before a patent was obtained from the Government, the Youngs both died. Weed then, in 1839, entered the land and the title of the whole tract was consequently in his name.
>
> Soon after this, Isaac Fellows, a brother-in-law to the Youngs, came out from New York for the purpose of administering on their estate, and of securing to himself, as heir, their interest. Amicable settlement was made, by Weed transferring an undivided one-half interest in the tract to Isaac Fellows. Thus Fellows and Weed became joint proprietors of the town. Subsequently. Isaac Fellows conveyed to Augustus Fellows all of his interest. and some other parties, who laid some claim to the Young estate, quit-claimed to him. The title then vested in Henry Weed and Augustus Fellows.
>
> In 1842, Henry Weed died, leaving, as his heirs, Henry Weed, Jr., John P. Lewis and Henry Stephens ─ the last two by virtue of their marriage with Weed's daughters. In 1849, Augustus Fellows died, leaving the undivided half interest to his wife, who subsequently married Nelson Buck.
>
> A few years later, a suit. was instituted for the purpose of dividing the property. Commissioners were appointed, and what was considered by them as an equitable portion was set off to the heirs of Weed ─ Lewis, Stevens and Weed ─ and the remainder to Mrs. Buck.
>
> This will explain how some of the oldest titles run from Weed, and some from Weed and Fellows, and why some of the more modern primary titles run from Stevens, Lewis and Weed, and others from Mrs. Buck.

John Dehner Purchases Jones House Lot in 1857

According to Robert Arnold Schlosser in the September 27, 1984 issue of the ***Update*** newsletter, John Dehner purchased the lot on October 23, 1857.

> On October 23, 1857, for a consideration of five hundred dollars, John Dehner purchased the above property, lots one and two in block 51. On lot two, even before this purchase, a small frame building may have been built as a temporary house. The brick structure was built directly in front of the small frame structure with an opening between, the two units becoming one home of adequate size for the Dehner family.

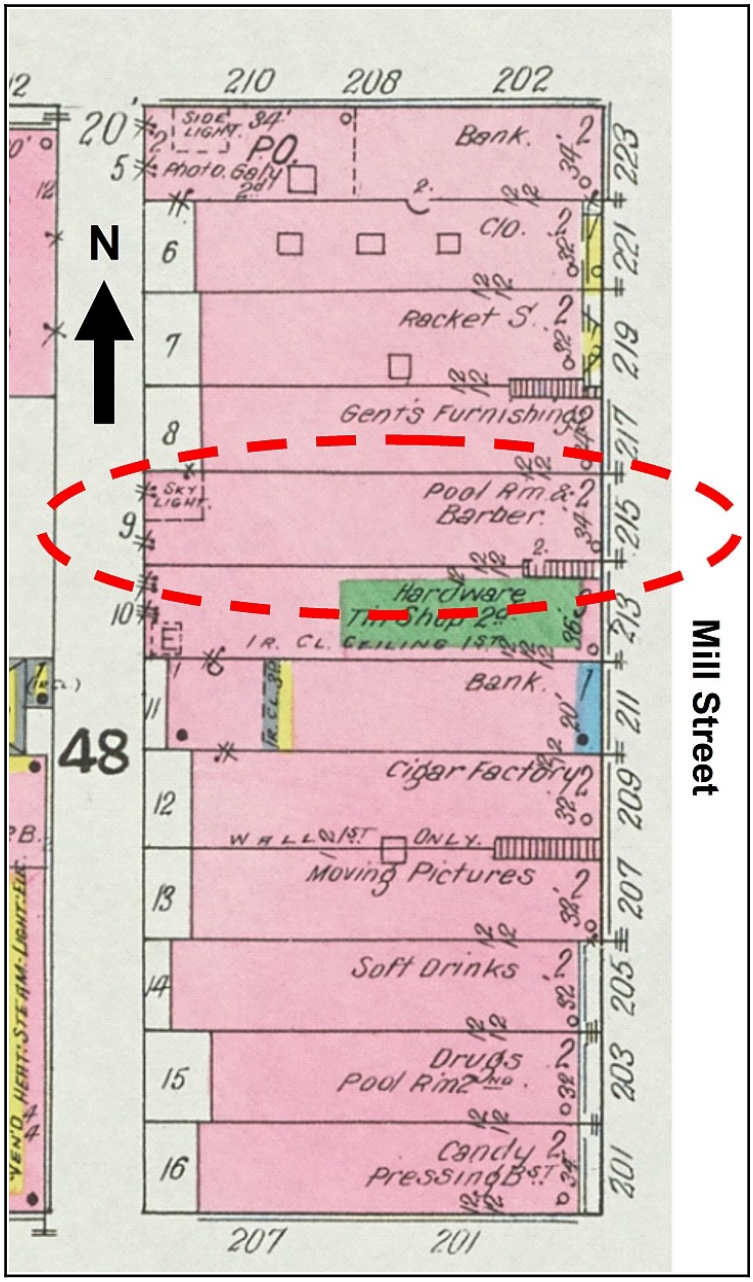
John Dehner and Job Dye Go Into Business in Early 1857

Robert Arnold Schlosser of the Livingston County Historical Society, did some research about the Jones House. He published some of his research results in the September 27, 1984 issue of the ***Update*** newsletter.

> On February 13, 1857, John Dehner and Job Dye purchased a store building on the west side of the square, about where the Clothes Closet is located, lot nine in block forty-eight, in consideration of two hundred and thirty dollars. John Dehner and Job E. Dye were partners in a dry goods business store known as Dehner & Co. There is a possibility that a relationship existed between the Dehner and Dye families.

Location of John Dehner and Job Dye Business

The 1910 Sanborn map identifies block and lot numbers. Block 48 and Lot 9 is about in the center of businesses west of the courthouse. The location is shown below.



The oldest Pontiac Sanborn map is the 1888 map. It shows the same building structures as shown on the 1910 map above.

Job Dye in the 1878 Livingston County History Book

The first mention of Job Dye is shown below.

> Job E. Dye was an early resident of the county, and made a good Sheriff. Since then he has been engaged in the grain business.

This history book also has a biography for Job Dye. A copy is shown below.

> **J. E. DYE**, grain and coal, Pontiac; was horn in Miami County, Ohio, February 20, 1820. He followed merchandising there until 1849, when he removed to Tippecanoe Co., Ind., continuing in trade there until his removal to Livingston Co., in 1856; here he opened a general store, and also engaged in the grain and lumber business; in 1860, he disposed of his business and began dealing in stock.
>
> In 1863, he was elected Sheriff of the county, and served as such two years. He continued in the stock business until 1868, when he resumed the grain business, which he has followed ever since, with the exception of about a year and a half, during which time he superintended the Pontiac Woolen Mill for Messrs. Duff & Cowan.
>
> He was married in September, 1844, to Miss Sarah Ivers, of Miami Co., Ohio; she died in 1846, leaving one child-Deborah Virginia. He was married again in 1854 to Mrs. Mary Jackson, of Dayton, Ohio, who died in 1855. In February, 1857, he was married to Miss M. A. Watson, of Jasper Co., Ind. They have three children-Carrie L., Sarah E., and Mary J. Mr. Dye has served three terms as member of the City Council of Pontiac.

This biography noted that he opened a general store in Pontiac in 1856. This was likely with John Dehner as noted above.

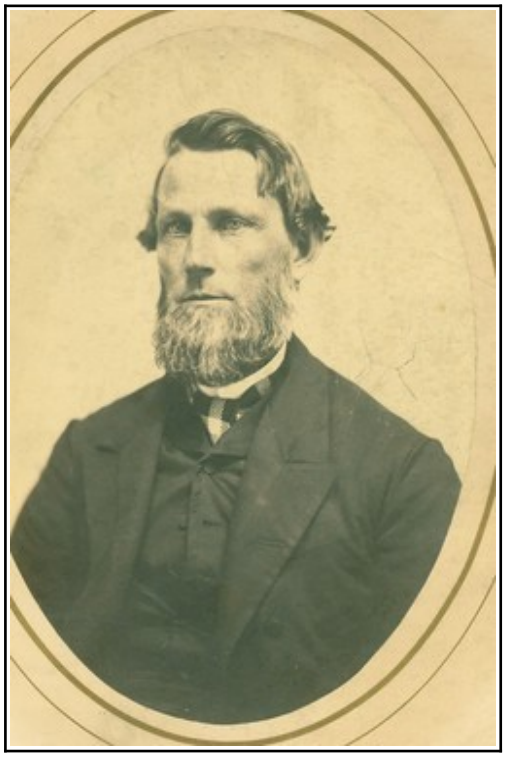
Job Dye in the 1909 History Book

The 1909 history book mentions that Job Dye was in business with John Dehner.

> Job E. Dye was engaged with John Dehner in his general store, remaining with the firm until they retired from business, when he engaged in buying grain, at which business he continued until his death about twenty years ago.

Job Dye Old Photograph

An old photograph of Job Dye was found on Ancestry.com. A copy of this photo is shown below.



Unusual Funeral for Job Dye at His Residence

Job Dye died in 1880 at the age of 60. He was buried in the Pontiac cemetery. The July 31, 1880 edition of the Miami Union newspaper reprinted an obituary for Job Dye that was originally published in the Pontiac Sentinel.

Today, the body of the deceased is taken to a funeral home where various types of services are held. In the 1880 era, the body was displayed at the residence of the deceased. Visitations and funeral services were then held at the residence.

An excerpt from this obituary is shown below about the funeral of Job Dye in Pontiac.

> The funeral services were conducted in the grounds attached to the house, the Masonic Lodge of Pontiac, of which deceased was an old and honored member, having charge of them. The casket was placed in the center of the yard with the fraternity formed in a hollow square around it.

> On the casket was an anchor and cross formed of tuberoses and balsam, while at the head on a stand was a beautiful pillow of white flowers with the word “Father”, worked in the center of wax flowers. On either side and near the foot were stands containing flowers in beautiful designs, including a square and compasses and Greek cross. The many friends of the deceased and family having seemingly vied with each other in bringing floral tributes of love and respect for the sad occasion.
>
> The funeral sermon was preached by Rev. C. D. Merritt, of Fairbury, and a prayer was offered by Rev. G. W. Clue. The beautiful and impressive ceremony of the Masonic Order was then performed, the friends took a last look at the face of the departed, and the funeral cortege took up its slow march to the cemetery, headed by the Chatsworth band playing a solemn dirge and followed by a long line of carriages. The remains were deposited in their final resting places by the hands of old friends, the last sad words of farewell were spoken, the earth deposited again over the bier, and a mass of flowers left to deck the grave, May he rest in peace,

Mention of Oldest Brick Structure in 1909 History Book

The 1909 history book has the following mention of John Dehner building the oldest brick building in Livingston County.

> John Dehner built the first brick building around the square, it being completed in 1857. The building was three stories high, the top floor being used for a hall for dancing parties and other entertainments. The building still stands, although the front has been greatly changed and does not much resemble the building of fifty years ago. Mr. Dehner and son conducted a general store. Both are dead.

1860 Census

In the 1860 Census, John Dehner and his wife Jane lived at Pontiac, Illinois. John listed his occupation as a merchant. John owned $16,000 of real estate and had a personal estate of $12,000. His net worth of $28,000 would be equivalent to $936,000 in today’s dollars.

John Dehner & Co. Listed in 1860 Business Directory

The 1860 Illinois State Business Directory book published a listing for John Dehner & Co. in Pontiac, in Livingston County.

John Dehner Involved with Livingston County Fair in 1860

The April 26, 1860 edition of the ***Prairie Farmer*** magazine published an article about John Dehner and the Livingston County Fair.

> **Agricultural Societies**
>
> Livingston County, Illinois ─The next annual fair of this society is to be held at Pontiac, September 11th, 12th, and 13th. The officers for 1860 are: President, S. L. Manker, Pontiac; Vice-President, Wm. Perry, Pontiac; Treasurer, John Dehner, Pontiac; Secretary, Hon. B. P. Babcock, Esmen; Board of Directors, Wm. B. Lyon, Reading; Thos. Mills, Long Point; M. B. Patty, Pontiac; Benj. Walton, Fairbury; T. W. Brydia, Five Mile Grove; G. M. Bedinger, Chenoa; C. B. Ostrander, Avoca.

Civil War Begins in 1861

At 4:30 a.m. on April 12, 1861, Confederate troops fired on Fort Sumter in South Carolina's Charleston Harbor. Less than 34 hours later, Union forces surrendered. Traditionally, this event has been used to mark the beginning of the Civil War.

The Civil War lasted about four years. On April 9, 1865, Robert E. Lee surrendered the last major Confederate army to Ulysses S. Grant at Appomattox Courthouse.

1861 Book Mentions John Dehner and the Livingston County Fair

In 1861, the book titled ***Transactions of the Illinois State Agricultural Society with Notices and Proceedings of County Societies*** was published by Bailhache & Baker. The report for the 1860 Livingston County Fair is shown below.

LIVINGSTON COUNTY.

REPORT FOR 1860.

Officers for 1860:

President—S. L. Manker.
Vice President—Wm. Perry.
Secretary—B. P. Babcock.
Treasurer—John Dehner.
Directors—Wm. B. Lyon, M. B. Patty, T. M. Bridy, Benj. Walton, G. M. Bedinger.

The Livingston County Agricultural Society was legally organized in April, 1857, with the following board of officers:

President—Otis Richardson.
Secretary—S. C. Ladd.
Treasurer—Robert Aul.

A committee of five was appointed, at the first meeting, to purchase grounds for the use of the Society. They succeeded in getting ten acres adjoining the town of Pontiac—four of which were inclosed with a board fence seven feet high. The fair was held in October, and the exhibition proved very creditable to all concerned; but, unfortunately, the purchasing and fitting up of the grounds exhausted the funds, leaving nothing to be appropriated for premiums, which caused dissatisfaction among the exhibitors. The annual address was delivered by M. Medill, of the Prairie Farmer.

The election of officers for 1858, took place in April, and resulted as follows:

President—Wm. Manlove.
Vice President—Austin Henslee.
Secretary—S. C. Ladd.
Treasurer—Robert Aul.

The fair was held on the 6th and 7th of October. The interest manifested throughout the county inspired high hopes of a successful exhibition, but the opening morning was ushered in with heavy peals of thunder, followed by torrents of rain, which continued to fall through the day. The fair was adjourned over one day, but the visitors were few, and the finances of the Society too low to pay all the premiums.

The address was delivered by Otis Richardson, Esq.

The election of officers for 1859, was held in March, with the following result:

President—Wm. Manlove.
Vice President—A. Henslee.
Secretary—S. L. Manker.
Treasurer—John Dehner.

The constitution was so amended as to have the election of officers take place on the last day of the fair. The exhibition commenced on the 28th of September, and continued three days. The attendance was very good, and all seemed pleased. There were 138 entries of vegetables, which were very fine; 100 of horses, some of them blooded stallions; and the trotting elicited great applause. The cattle department was not so full as we could have desired; but, in quality, would have honored an older county than ours The receipts were ample to pay the premiums and other expenses, which has put the Society in the full confidence of exhibitors.

The address was delivered by S. L. Manker, after which, the Society went into the election of officers as reported above.

Stores Start Offering Civil War Tokens in 1862

By 1862, the second year of the Civil War, government-issued coinage began vanishing from circulation. As is common during times of war, precious and semi-precious metals became more and more valuable, and inflation began. As tensions escalated between the North and South in early 1862, clever investors anticipated that gold, silver and similar metals would become worth much more than their coin value.

The increased inflation in metal prices caused an increase in currency inflation. To protect against this inflation, it became necessary to save aggressively. People began to hoard their coins instead of spending them.

Of course, this inflated the value of the money that still remained in active circulation, prompting even more people to begin saving instead of spending. If a one-cent coin was suddenly worth the equivalent of five cents, it would be better to save it than to spend it (at least in the short term). Gold and silver were also not used for trade.

With no coins in circulation and with inflation rising, any new coins the government minted were quickly snatched up as well. In order to cap the inflation rate and force the use of already-minted coins, federal production of coins was halted as the Civil War continued to escalate the demand for resources.

Fewer and fewer coins were being used, and by the end of 1862, hardly anybody would use coins to buy or sell. Business owners needed the ability to sell goods and services, but without any coins to trade, commerce would have come to a standstill.

To continue their businesses, many merchants turned to private minters to fill the void left by the hoarded coins. The first of these privately minted tokens appeared in the autumn of 1862 by H. A. Ratterman in Cincinnati, Ohio. New York issues followed in the spring of 1863, first with Lindenmueller currency store card tokens issued by New York City barkeep Gustavus Lindenmueller and then with Knickerbocker currency patriotic tokens issued by William H. Bridgens. It is estimated that by 1864, there were 25 million Civil War tokens (nearly all redeemable for one cent) in circulation, consisting of approximately 7,000–8,000 varieties.

Civil War tokens advertised the name and location of privately owned businesses. Wealthier businesses that could afford it had two custom dies made, with both sides promoting the business. Most companies had tokens stamped that displayed the business's information on only one side of the token.

Civil War tokens became illegal after the United States Congress passed a law on April 22, 1864, prohibiting the issue of any one or two-cent coins, tokens, or devices for use as currency. On June 8, 1864, an additional law forbade all private coinage.

After the tokens were made illegal, people started to collect them. New books that list all the different tokens manufactured continue to be published. In 1967, The Civil War Token Society was formed. It is a national, non-profit organization dedicated to stimulating interest and research in Civil War token collecting. The Society publishes a journal (Civil War Era Numismatics), conducts auctions, maintains a reference library, provides an attribution service for a nominal fee, establishes state chapters, and operates regional meetings. There are approximately 1,000 active members. Civil War tokens continue to be sold at many different online auction sites today.

John Dehner Elected to Pontiac Township Supervisor in 1863

According to the 1878 history book, John Dehner was elected to be the Pontiac Township Supervisor starting in 1863.

> **Pontiac Township**
>
> In 1857, the county voted to adopt what is known as the Township Organization Act: and accordingly, the township election held in this township took place April 6, 1858.
>
> The election was held at the Court House. Dr. Darius Johnson being called to the chair. A motion was made and carried that Ira Loveless act as Moderator, and Nelson Buck was chosen Clerk. After being sworn by J. W. Remick, the polls were opened and 179 votes polled.
>
> The result of the first election was the choosing of Wm. T. Russell as Supervisor: E. R. Maples, Clerk: S. L. Manker, Assessor: Jerome Garner, Overseer of the Poor; Wm. Manlove, James Nelson and A. D. Eylar, Commissioners of Highways; Jacob Steamer and Adams Morrow, Justices of the Peace; E. H. Masters and Joseph H. Virgin, Constables. Samuel McCormick and James W. Remick were candidates for Collector, and, each receiving 89 votes, a tie was declared. The candidates agreed to a new election, which was held on the 24th. The second election brought out a very full vote, Remick receiving 109 and McCormick 91.
>
> The first road authorized by the Commissioners was that known as the Avoca Road, and "extended from the south end of Locust street, in Pontiac, running south, east and south, to a point at the township line, being the southeast corner of the Taylor farm." Five other roads were also authorized and surveyed during the year.

Principal Officers by Year

The following shows the names of the principal officers elected at each subsequent township election, and also, the number of votes cast at each:

Date.	Supervisor.	Clerk.	Assessor.	Collector.	Vote.
1858	William T. Russell...	E. R. Maples.....	S. L. Manker.....	James W. Remick.....	179
1859	Jonathan Duff.....	R. W. Babcock.....	William Gore.....	C. N. Coe.....	200
1860	Henry Hill.....	A. W. Cowan.....	J. F. Culver.....	H. J. Babcock.....	121
1861	Henry Hill.....	J. R. Wolgamot.....	William Gore.....	J. A. Fellows.....	208
1862	B. W. Gray.....	A. W. Cowan.....	William Gore.....	J. A. Fellows.....	262
1863	John Dehner.....	F. H. Bond.....	S. C. Ladd.....	G. Wolgamat.....	237
1864	John Dehner.....	F. H. Bond.....	S. C. Ladd.....	J. R. Wolgamot.....	186
1865	John Dehner.....	J. W. Smith.....	S. S. Lawrence.....	Robert Kingore.....	214
1866	John Dehner.....	Isaac Aerl.....	J. H. Gaff.....	George Fowler.....	292
1867	W. B. Lyon.....	S. S. Lawrence.....	N. Buck.....	H. Tuckerman.....	259
1868	J. Duff.....	J. A. Fellows.....	William Gore.....	Charles Watson.....	387
1869	J. Duff.....	George Pittenger.....	William Gore.....	L. Bancroft.....	378
1870	J. Duff.....	W. H. Jenkins.....	William Perry.....	C. A. Campbell.....	427
1871	R. W. Babcock.....	J. T. Kay.....	William Perry.....	L. G. Goodspeed.....	458
1872	R. W. Babcock.....	J. T. Kay.....	William Perry.....	L. G. Goodspeed.....	462
1873	J. E. Morrow.....	A. W. Cowan.....	William Perry.....	J. H. Smith.....	424
1874	J. E. Morrow.....	A. W. Cowan.....	J. H. Gaff.....	James H. Campbell...	454
1875	J. E. Morrow.....	A. W. Cowan.....	J. H. Gaff.....	John Egan.....	520
1876	J. E. Morrow.....	A. W. Cowan.....	J. H. Gaff.....	John Egan.....	537
1877	J. E. Morrow.....	Z. Winters.....	William Perry.....	S. Mossholder.....	636
1878	J. E. Morrow.....	A. W. Cowan.....	William Perry.....	S. Mossholder.....	648

1863 Dehner & Maples Store Token

A token was recently advertised on the Internet. This 1863 token is about the same size as a U.S. dime coin. This token indicates that John Dehner was in business with a Mr. Maples in the year 1863. This token has four notches on the outer diameter.

Another 1863 Dehner & Maples Store Token

Another token was recently advertised for sale on the Internet.

This token was purchased in October of 2023 and was donated to the Livingston County Historical Society. A special display box was designed and built by the author to display this 1863 token in the Jones House.

A review of old books that documented all the known Civil War tokens issued was performed. According to these old guide books, the only known Civil War token issued by a business in Pontiac, Illinois, is the 1863 Dehner & Maples token.

Photo of Token Display Box

The photo below shows the display box for the token. The quarter coin shown in this photo was replaced with the actual token.

Mr. Maples Information

According to the Livingston County history books, Edward Rathen Maples (1832-1877) was a carpenter who came from New York to Pontiac shortly after the first railroad was established in 1854.

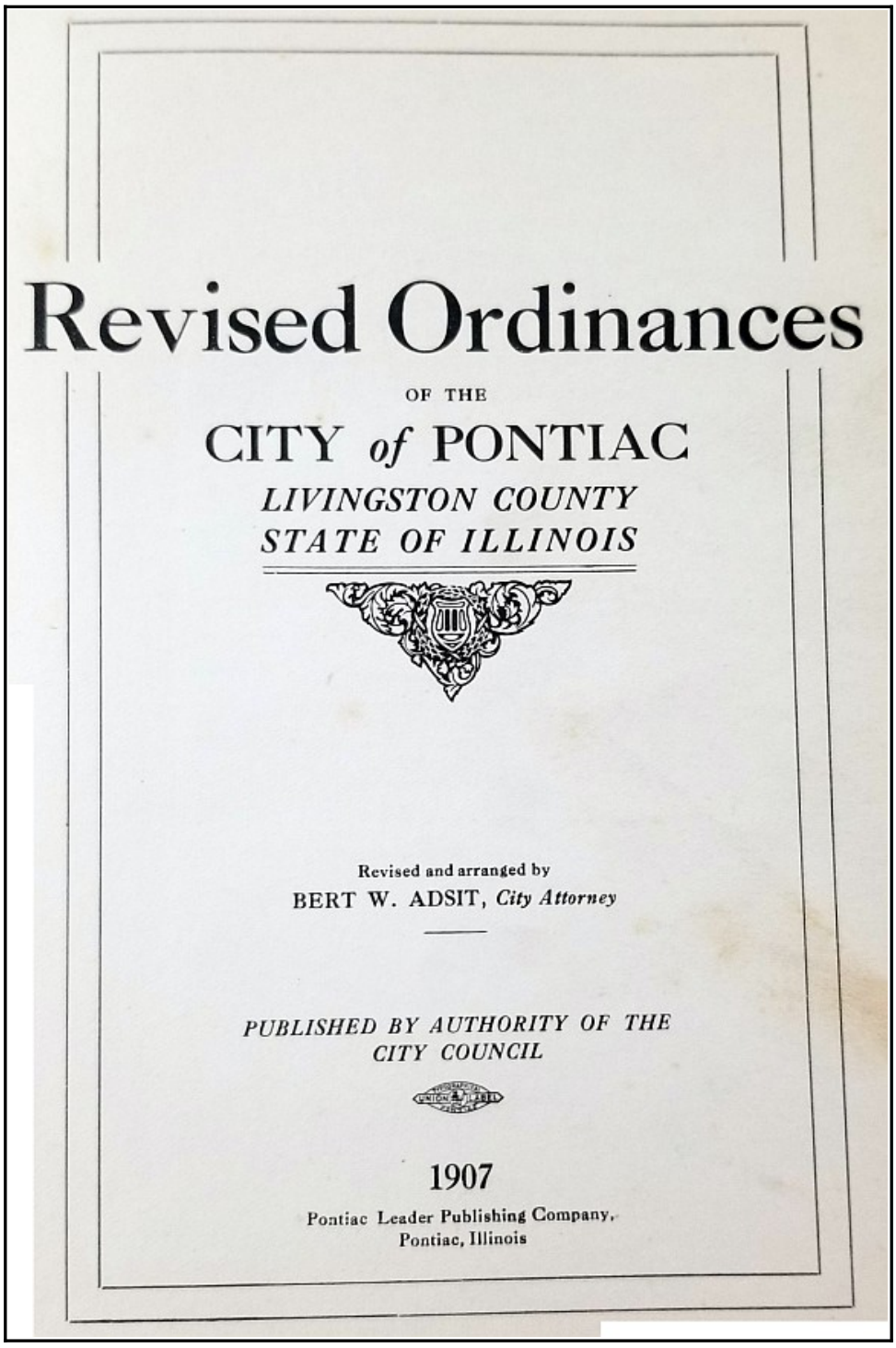
Mr. Maples was elected to County Sheriff and was very popular in the Pontiac area. He died in Pontiac in 1877 and is buried in the Southside Cemetery in Pontiac. Mr. Maples had a very elaborate funeral when he died.

No reference could be found for Mr. Maples being in business with John Dehner in 1863 in Pontiac. The two men knew each other because Pontiac was a relatively small town in that era.

According to a January 11, 1877, Sentinel article, both Mr. Maples and Mr. Dehner were founding members of the United Order of Ancient Templars in Pontiac.

Interesting 1907 Book Discovered in Historical Society Archives in 2024

In January of 2024, all of the historical books in the archives were sorted and inventoried. During this process, and interesting book published in 1907 was discovered. The title page of this book is shown below.



Revised Ordinances

OF THE

CITY *of* PONTIAC

LIVINGSTON COUNTY
STATE OF ILLINOIS

Revised and arranged by
BERT W. ADSIT, *City Attorney*

PUBLISHED BY AUTHORITY OF THE CITY COUNCIL

1907

Pontiac Leader Publishing Company,
Pontiac, Illinois

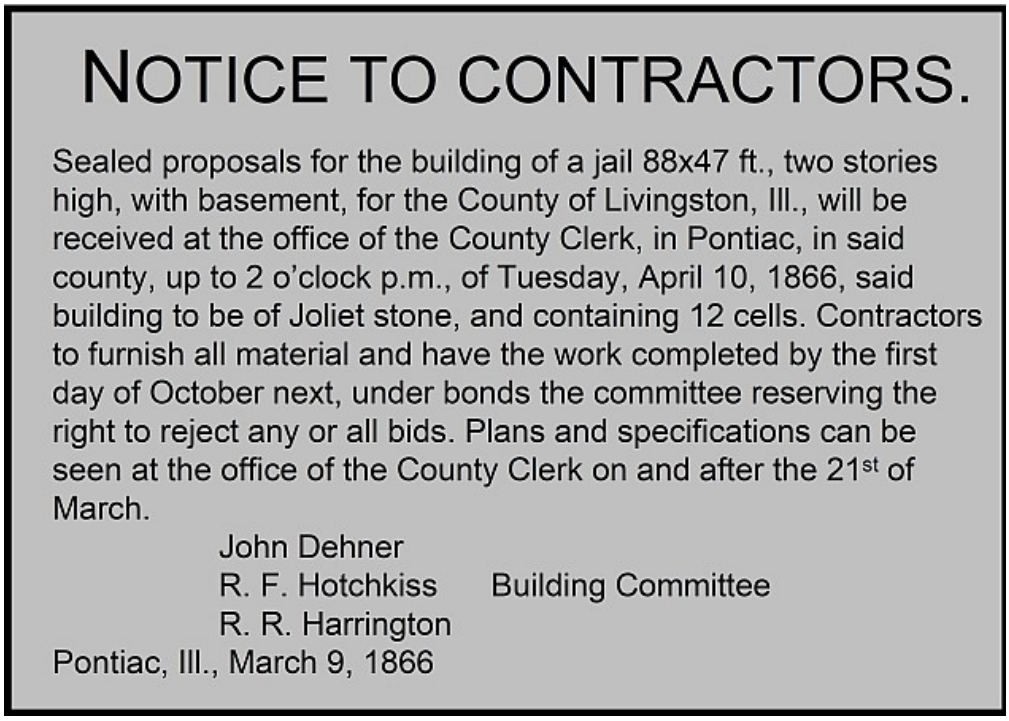
The first chapter of this book gives a history of the early officials of Pontiac. This information was extracted from the 1907 book and put into a summary chart.

Year	Office	Name
1856	President	Henry Jones
1856	Trustee	J. W. Strevell
1856	Trustee	Z. H. Nettleton
1857	President	Z. H. Nettleton
1857	Trustee	Henry Jones
1860	Trustee	Edwin R. Maples
1860	Trustee	Job E. Dye
1865	Trustee	Edwin R. Maples
1866	President	John Dehner
1868	Trustee	Edwin R. Maples
1869	President	John Dehner
1870	President	John Dehner
1870	Trustee	Job E. Dye
1872	Treasurer	Edwin R. Maples
1873	Treasurer	Edwin R. Maples
1874	Treasurer	Edwin R. Maples
1875	Treasurer	Edwin R. Maples
1876	Treasurer	Edwin R. Maples
1877	Alderman	Job E. Dye

Because Pontiac was a relatively small town in the 1800s, all of these men likely knew each other.

John Dehner Involved with Building First Livingston County Jail in 1866

John Dehner was also involved with building the first County Jail at Pontiac. The March 24, 1866 Chicago Tribune published a notice for John Dehner. The image quality of the original notice is very poor. The notice was redrawn and the image is shown below.



NOTICE TO CONTRACTORS.

Sealed proposals for the building of a jail 88x47 ft., two stories high, with basement, for the County of Livingston, Ill., will be received at the office of the County Clerk, in Pontiac, in said county, up to 2 o'clock p.m., of Tuesday, April 10, 1866, said building to be of Joliet stone, and containing 12 cells. Contractors to furnish all material and have the work completed by the first day of October next, under bonds the committee reserving the right to reject any or all bids. Plans and specifications can be seen at the office of the County Clerk on and after the 21st of March.

John Dehner
R. F. Hotchkiss Building Committee
R. R. Harrington

Pontiac, Ill., March 9, 1866

In 1940, a book was published with the title of ***Inventory of the County Archives of Illinois prepared by the WPA for Livingston County (Pontiac) No. 53***. This book has a small section about the first Livingston County Jail.

Historical Sketch

At the time the courthouses were erected no plans for a jail were being made, and indeed none was built until thirty years after the organization of the county. Prisoners of the county were taken to Joliet, Ottawa, and Bloomington prisons, Livingston County paying the expense of feeding and guarding them. Finally, in March, 1866, steps were taken to build a Jail for the county.

The board appointed a special committee composed of John Dehner, B. F. Hotchkiss, J. G. Strong, and R. B. Harrington to take charge of the plans and erection of the Jail, and passed a resolution appropriating $8,000 from swamp-land funds - the whole cost of the building not to exceed $10,000.

The plan for the sturdy two-story stone structure was made by W. G. Thompson, an architect of Joliet. In July, the contract was let to Don Bogart of Chicago, who made the lowest bid of $16,950. When, however, the building was completed and accepted on January of the following year, the total cost came to $17,743.59. It stood unchanged until the winter of 1906-7, when it was remodeled and modernized at considerable cost.

Old postcard of Livingston County Jail in Pontiac, Illinois.

The old Livingston County Jail built in 1866 was torn down in May of 2017.

John Dehner Loses Election to Become Livingston County Treasurer in 1866

The 1878 history book recounts that there was an election in 1866 for Livingston County Treasurer. Wm. B. Fryfe won this election with 1,398 votes. Mr. J. I. Dunlop received 738 votes and John Dehner received 597 votes.

John Dehner Involved with Adding a Second Railroad for Pontiac

The November 28, 1866 Pantagraph published an article about a meeting held in Pontiac.

> November 28, 1866
> The Pantagraph
> Report of Railroad Meeting
>
> A meeting having been called by the citizens of Pontiac, at Dehner's Hall, Saturday evening, November 17th, 1866, for the purpose of agitating the subject of a cross Railroad from El Paso to Kankakee city, or from Fairbury to Ottawa, making Pontiac a point on the road.
>
> The meeting was organized by appointing John Dehner, Chairman, and S. C. Ladd, Secretary. The meeting was well attended, and a deep feeling was manifested on the part of the audience by their attention and interest in what was said. The speakers entered also into the subject with warmth, and the matter was discussed until a late hour.
>
> A committee of five was appointed to gather information on the subject, correspond with or visit parties to obtain facts, and draft a plan of operation, and report to a subsequent meeting, to be called as soon as the committee is able to make a report.
>
> The committee consists of S. L. Fleming, N. Buck, J. W. Strevell, James Stout, and S. C. Ladd. The meeting adjourned without delay.
>
> S. C. Ladd, Secretary
>
> Pontiac, November 22d, 1866.

John Dehner an Officer in New Railroad Corporation Approved by the Illinois State Legislature in 1867

In 1867, a book was published with the title of ***Private Laws of the State of Illinois Passed by the Twenty-Fifth General Assembly convened January 7, 1867 Volume II***. In 1867, the Illinois Legislature approved the incorporation of 86 new railroads in Illinois.

One of these new railroads approved was called "An Act to incorporate the Fairbury, Pontiac and Northwestern Railway Company." Some excerpts from this lengthy law are shown below.

> Section 1. Be it enacted by the People of the State of Illinois, represented in the General Assembly, that Samuel L. Fleming, Nelson Buck, Jonathan Duff, William Strawn, R. B. Harrington, B. P. Babcock, S. C. Crane, John Dehner, S. C. Ladd, Walter Cornell, M. E. Collins, R. Plumb, Enoch Lundy, David McIntosh, H. L. Marsh, W. G. McDowell, J. W. Strevell, J. B. Tyler, William B. Lyon, of Livingston county, Illinois, and their associates and successors, are hereby created a body corporate and politic, under the name and style of "The Fairbury, Pontiac, and Northwestern Railway Company."
>
> And said company are hereby authorized and empowered to locate, construct and complete a railroad, commencing at or near Fairbury, in Livingston County, thence to Pontiac in said county, and then northwestwardly, to the most feasible point on the line of the Ottawa, Oswego and Fox River Valley Railroad, for an intersection therewith, to be determined by said company; with one or more tracks or lines of rails. Said company shall commence the construction of said road in good faith within three years, and shall complete the same within ten years.

This complete legal act is six pages long. The entire legal act creating this railroad can be accessed at Archive.Org at https://tinyurl.com/4bmvtmt5.

The Fairbury, Pontiac, and Northwestern Railway Company Eventually Became the Chicago & Paducah Railroad

The 1878 history book has a description of how this railroad eventually became the Chicago & Paducah Railroad.

> The road now known as the Chicago & Paducah has a local history, it being a Livingston County corporation. In 1865, Mr. Samuel L. Fleming, of Pontiac, a man who had spent a small fortune in railroading, drew, and got passed by the Legislature, a charter for a railroad from Ottawa to Fairbury. The corporators' named in the charter were S. C. Ladd, B. P. Babcock, Samuel L. Fleming, Nelson Buck. Jonathan Duff, Wm. Strawn, R. B. Harrington, S. C. Crane, John Dehner, Walter Cornell, M. E. Collins., Ralph Plumb, Enoch

Lundy, David McIntosh, H. L. Marsh, W. G. McDowell, J. W. Strevell, I. B. Tyler, and Wm. B. Lyon.

In 1867, the charter was amended so that the road might run anywhere northerly and southerly of Pontiac-that point being retained. The name, however, in the charter was retained. Under the impetus given to railroad building by the “grab law " of 1869. the company was formed, M. E. Collins being elected President and S. S. Lawrence, Secretary.

The townships of Indian Grove, Avoca, Eppard's Point, Owego, Pontiac, Amity and Newtown issued bonds, and with these in hand the Fairbury, Pontiac & Northwestern Company made a contract with Col. Ralph Plumb, of Streator, Col. W. H. W. Cushman, of Ottawa, and David Strawn, to build and equip the road, transferring to them all the bonds and issuing the stock to them, so that when built it became theirs.

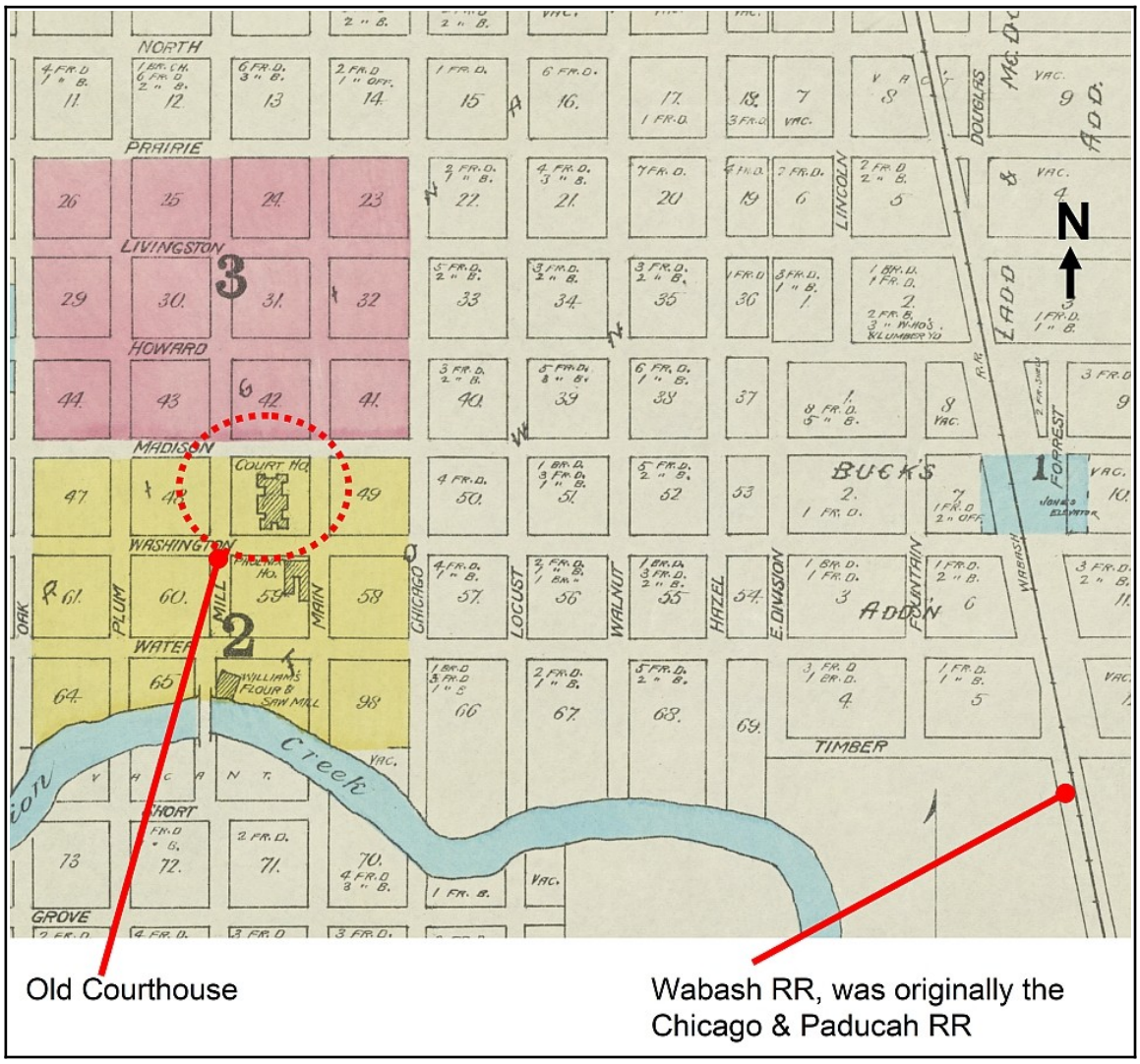
In this contract was a stipulation that the parties of the second part would never transfer the road to the Chicago & Alton R. R. Co.; the intent being, of course, to keep this a competing road.

They built the road from Streator through this county, pushing it south through Ford, Champaign, Piatt, Moultrie, Shelby and Effingham Counties to Altamont.

Its stations in this county are Newtown, Cornell, Rowe, Pontiac, McDowell, Lodemia, Fairbury, Murphy's, and Strawn. It connects at Streator with the Ottawa branch of the Chicago, Burlington & Quincy. It has forty-one miles of track in the county.

Map of Chicago & Paducah Tracks in Pontiac

This railroad got renamed to the Wabash Railroad and it is shown on the 1888 Sanborn Insurance map of Pontiac.



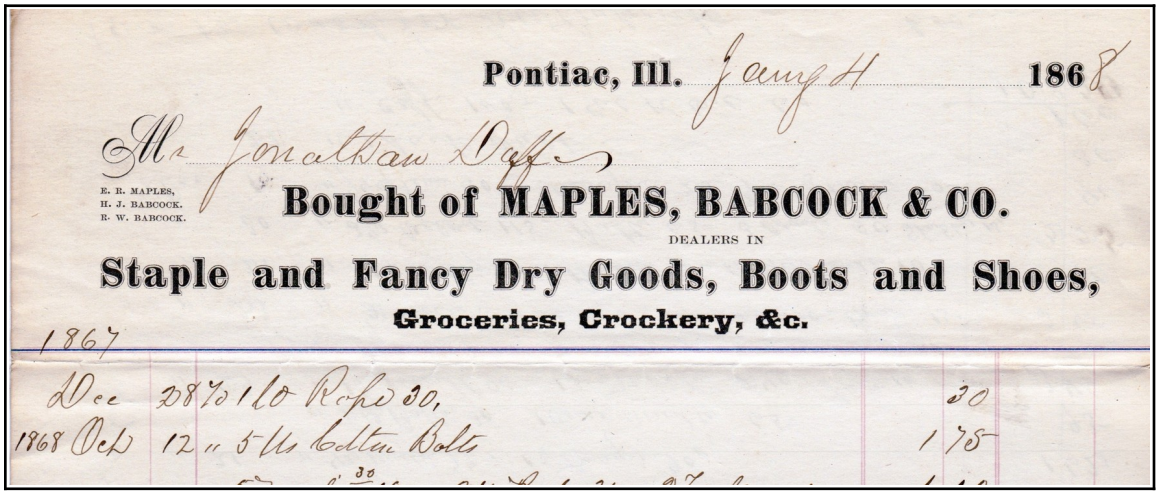
Tracks Removed in the 1970s

This railroad remained in service until some time in the late 1970s when it was shut down and the tracks removed.

Dehner & Maples Partnership Ended Before 1868

The Dehner & Maples Civil War token indicates these two gentlemen were in business together in 1863 when the tokens were issued.

In November of 2023, a bill from the firm of Maples, Babcock & Co. dated January 1868 was donated to the Livingston County Historical Society. The letterhead for this bill is shown below.



Pontiac, Ill. January 1868

Mr Jonathan Duff

E. R. MAPLES,
H. J. BABCOCK.
R. W. BABCOCK.

Bought of MAPLES, BABCOCK & CO.

DEALERS IN

Staple and Fancy Dry Goods, Boots and Shoes,

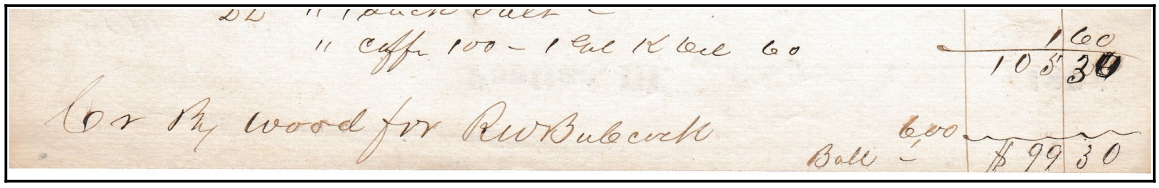
Groceries, Crockery, &c.

1867

Dec 28 To 1 lb Rope 30,

1868 Oct 12 " 5 lbs Cotton Balls 1 75

The itemized list of goods purchased starts with December of 1867 and then switches to 1868 purchases. At the bottom of the second page of the invoice, there is a $6.00 credit entry for R. W. Babcock for wood.



" Coffee 100 - 1 Gal K Oil 60 1 60

105 30

Cr By wood for R W Babcock 6 00

Bal $99 30

This letterhead indicates that Dehner & Maples were no longer business partners by the year 1868. Their partnership apparently ended sometime between the 1863 issuance of the Civil War tokens and this 1868 letterhead.

The two-page invoice was scanned and uploaded to Archive.Org. A copy can be viewed or downloaded from https://tinyurl.com/44wn2enj.

Which Mr. Babcock was In Business with Mr. Maples in 1868?

In the era of the 1860s, there were at least four different Babcock men living in Pontiac. The first of these four men was Judson Wade Babcock (1837-1915). He rotated careers between farming and merchandising. According to his biography in the 1878 history book, he was farming in 1868 when Maples, Babcock & Co. letterhead was made.

> J. W. Babcock, dealer in groceries, crockery, glassware. etc., Pontiac; was born in Fulton Co., N. Y., Feb. 29, 1837; he lived there until he was about 15 years old, and then removed with his parents to Steuben Co., N. Y., where his parents now reside; he was raised to farming pursuits, which he followed until his removal to Livingston County; he received an academic education at the Franklin Academy, Prattsburg, N. Y., and after leaving school, taught for several years; he came to Livingston County in 1858, and after teaching a while, entered a hardware store. and three years later engaged in the grocery business for himself; he followed this about two years and then engaged in farming for some six years; he then resumed clerking for four years, and again engaged in merchandising, which he has followed to the present time. He was married May 18, 1862, to Miss Minnie S. Lawrence, daughter of A. Lawrence, Sr., of Pontiac; they have two children—Nettie K. and Lucy A.

The second Babcock was Rufus Welles Babcock (1822-1911). He was likely in merchandising in the 1868 era per his biography in the 1878 history book. There is also an unusual credit entry for wood for R. W. Babcock on the 1868 receipt. The customer was given $6.00 credit on his bill because he gave R. W. Babcock the wood.

> R. W. BABCOCK, Agent for the Chicago & Alton R. R. Co.; Pontiac; was born in Columbia Co., N. Y., July 29, 1822; he received an academic education, and at the age of 19 began the study of law; was admitted to the bar in 1844, and practiced his profession ten years. He was married Feb. 7, 1847, to Miss Elizabeth Reed, of Franklin Co., Mass.; they have six children, one of whom, Bennie C., is now living. Mr. Babcock came to Livingston County in 1856, and spent the first three years in farming; he then followed merchandising from 1859 to 1871, since which time he has been the Agent of the Chicago & Paducah and Chicago & Alton R. R. Cos. He served seven or eight years in the School Board, being one of the Directors at the time of the erection of the new public school building; he held the office of Town Clerk one year and served two terms on the Board or Supervisors; he was elected the first Mayor of the city in 1872, served two terms, and also served several terms on : the Board of Trustees and as a member of the City Council.

The third Babcock was William Chapin Babcock (1828-1876). He was also likely in merchandising in the 1868 era. The son of W. W. Babcock, A. L. Babcock, was too young to be in business with Mr. Maples. The biography for A. L. Babcock in the 1878 history book also includes information about his father, W. C. Babcock.

> A. L. BABCOCK, dealer in groceries, crockery, etc., Pontiac: was born in Albany County, N. Y., Dec. 22, 1851: in 1856, his father, W. C. Babcock, removed with his family to Livingston Co. and located at Pontiac, where he followed farming for about four years, and then engaged in the hardware business for a number of years. and finally for about seven years previous to his death he was engaged in the grain and stock business; he died Feb. 14, 1876; Mr. Babcock's mother still resides in Pontiac; the family consists of three children—Albert L. and two sisters, Emma and Sadie. Mr. Babcock was educated in the public schools of Pontiac, and at the age of 21 engaged in the grocery trade, which he still continues. He was married Sept. 12, 1877, to Miss Nettie Packer, of Pontiac, who was born in the State of New York Jan. 20, 1854.

The fourth Babcock was Judge Billings Pratt Babcock (1814-1893). According to the 1878 history book, Judge Babcock was focused on being a lawyer and holding political offices. No evidence was found that Judge Babcock was ever in merchandising. Unfortunately, there was no biography for Judge Babcock in the 1878 history book.

Rufus Welles Babcock the Most Likely to Have Been in Business with Mr. Maples in 1868

At this time, the available evidence seems to indicate that R. W. Babcock was in business with Mr. Maples in 1868. Further research is needed to verify this fact.

CHAPTER 3

The 1869 to 1922 John Dehner Era

Jones House Shown on 1869 Bird's Eye View of Pontiac

Before the age of hot air balloons and airplanes, artists made illustrations of towns and cities. They often walked around the town and made sketches of houses, then combined them into the bird's eye view composite illustration.

The website VintageCityMaps.com has information about the history of the bird's eye view maps. An excerpt from this website is shown below.

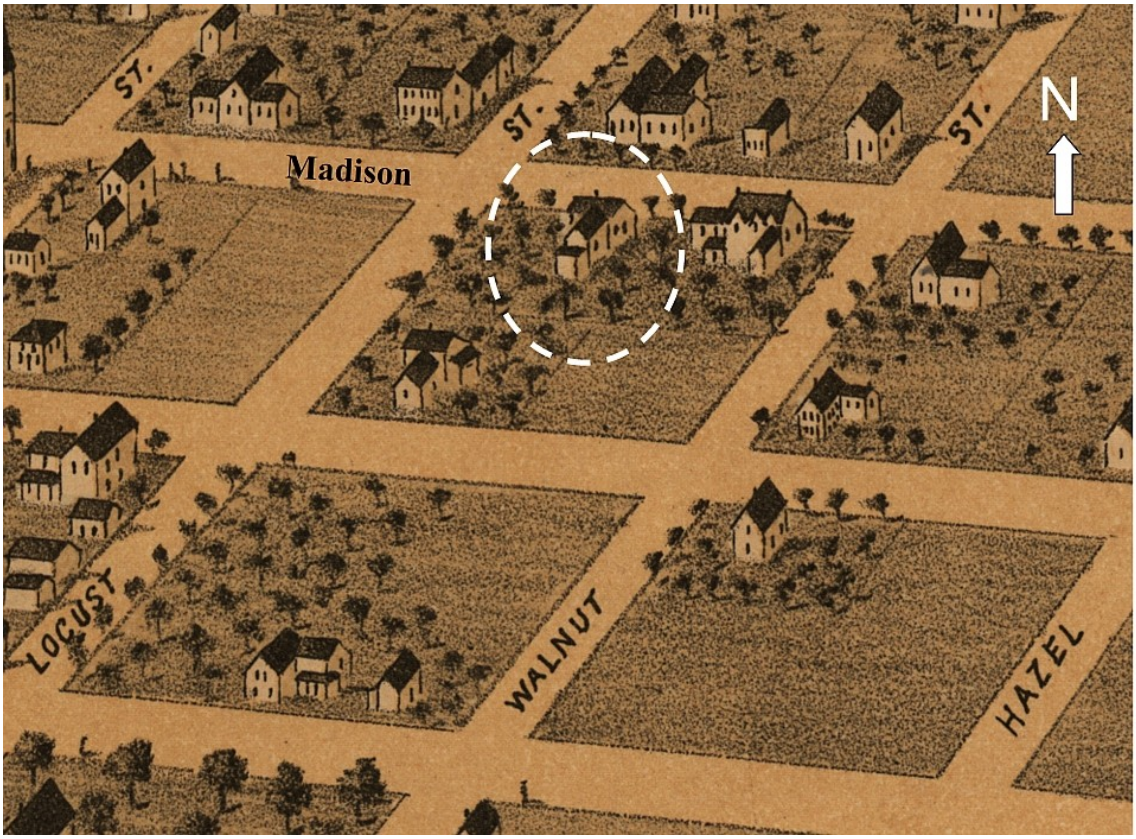
> A few thousand panoramic or "bird's eye view" maps of American and Canadian cities and towns were created between the 1840s and 1920s, with Albert Ruger, Thaddeus Mortimer Fowler, Lucien R. Burleigh, Henry Wellge, Augustus Koch, and Oakley Hoopes Bailey producing the majority of them. The majority of the maps were created by these six artists. More than half of the maps made were of towns and cities in the Northeastern United States.
>
> **Albert Ruger (1829-1899)**
>
> Albert Ruger was the first to achieve success as a panoramic artist. The collections of the Library of Congress Geography and Map Division contain 213 city maps drawn or published by Ruger or by Ruger & J. J. Stoner. The majority came from Ruger's personal collection, which the Library purchased in 1941 from John Ramsey of Canton, Ohio. Before this accession, there were only four Ruger city plans in the Geography and Map Division. Born in Prussia in 1829, Ruger emigrated to the United States and worked initially as a mason. While serving with the Ohio Volunteers during the Civil War, he drew views of Union campsites, among them Camp Chase in Ohio and Stephenson's Depot in Virginia. He continued to draw after the war, and his prints include a famous lithograph of Lincoln's funeral car passing the statehouse in Columbus, Ohio.
>
> By 1866, Ruger had settled in Battle Creek, Michigan, where he began his prolific panoramic mapping career by sketching Michigan cities. Urban communities in some twenty-two states and Canada, ranging from New Hampshire to Minnesota and south to Georgia and Alabama, were sketched by Ruger. He continued his activity into the 1890s, moving his business to Chicago, Madison, and St. Louis as he sought new markets. In the late 1860s, Ruger formed a partnership with J. J. Stoner of Madison, Wisconsin, and together they published numerous city panoramas. Ruger was particularly productive during the 1860s; in 1869 alone, he produced more than sixty panoramic maps. In addition to city plans, he drew views

of university campuses, among them Notre Dame, Shurtleff College, and the University of Michigan. Albert Ruger died in Akron, Ohio, on November 12, 1899.

In 1869, the Chicago Merchant's Lithographing Company published a map titled ***A Bird's Eye View of Pontiac*** by Mr. A. Ruger. A high resolution copy of this map can be viewed or download from the Library of Congress website at https://tinyurl.com/mpvyst3v.

Jones House Shown on 1869 Bird's Eye View

This map shows the Jones House which is on Madison Street and just west of Walnut Street.



Jones House on the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Pontiac Map

1870 U.S. Census

In this Census, John Dehner was age 63 and was living in Pontiac with his wife Jane Dehner, who was 71 years old. John listed his occupation as "Ret Dry Goods Merchant." It is assumed this means retired dry goods merchant. John listed his personal estate value at $6,500 and he owned real estate worth $27,000. This net worth of $33,500 in 1870 would be equivalent to $796,000 in today's dollars.

Boys Reformatory Facility Secured for Pontiac by Senator Jason W. Strevell

Jason W. Strevell was another leading citizen of Pontiac in this era. He served two terms in the Illinois State House and one term as an Illinois State Senator. While he was a State Senator, Mr. Strevell is credited with having the Illinois State Boy's Reformatory built at Pontiac. The February 27, 1871 Pantagraph reported that Mr. Strevell introduced an appropriation bill for the Reform School. His bill was referred to the Finance Committee.

This Boy's Reformatory morphed over time from a boy's institution to an adult male prison. Today is it known as the Pontiac Correctional Center.

John Dehner and Jason W. Strevell likely knew each very well. They were both involved in the creation of the Chicago & Paducah Railroad.

1871 Pontiac Sentinel ad for John Dehner's Store in Pontiac's

In July of 1986, Robert A. Schlosser found a series of advertisements for John Dehner's store in Pontiac on the west of the courthouse square next to the bank.

The same ad was repeated weekly for about seven months in the Sentinel newspaper. Mr. Schlosser explained how he found and re-created this ad. His explanation is shown below.

AN 1871 ADVERTISEMENT by JOHN DEHNER

The advertisement reproduced below appeared in The Pontiac Sentinel, a weekly newspaper. This reproduction was made with a typewriter, therefore, the style of the type as well as the lay-out of the copy does not match the type and layout that was used in the original ad. An effort was made to preserve the exact text and some of the layout style of the original ad.

The original ad was one column wide and nearly a half page high, so this reproduction is somewhat smaller than the original.

Apparently this ad appeared in every weekly issue of The Pontiac Sentinel beginning with issue dated October 5, 1871, and ending with issue dated May 16, 1872; thirty-three or thirty-four consecutive insertions in all.

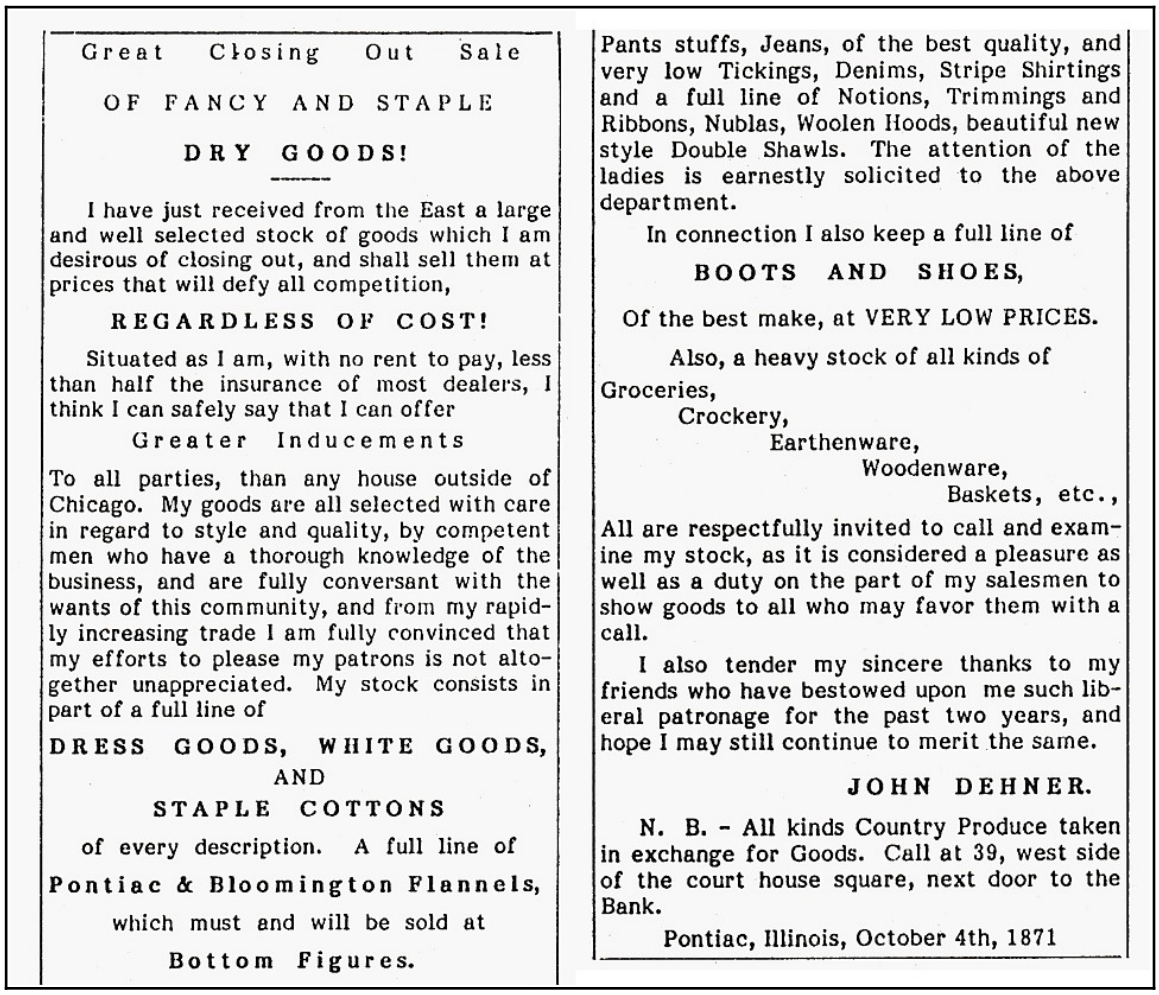
This 1871 John Dehner ad was prepared for use in the forthcoming booklet: APPENDIX, Part Two, for GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE.

Early issues of The Pontiac Sentinel were viewed on microfilm at The Pontiac Public Library. It was from that viewing that this reproduction was constructed.

This paper prepared in July of 1986 by Robert Arnold Schlosser, Pontiac, IL

The 1871 John Dehner Advertisement

The original advertisement was narrow in width and tall in height. This ad is split in half below, so it can be read more easily.



Great Closing Out Sale

OF FANCY AND STAPLE

DRY GOODS!

I have just received from the East a large and well selected stock of goods which I am desirous of closing out, and shall sell them at prices that will defy all competition,

REGARDLESS OF COST!

Situated as I am, with no rent to pay, less than half the insurance of most dealers, I think I can safely say that I can offer

Greater Inducements

To all parties, than any house outside of Chicago. My goods are all selected with care in regard to style and quality, by competent men who have a thorough knowledge of the business, and are fully conversant with the wants of this community, and from my rapidly increasing trade I am fully convinced that my efforts to please my patrons is not altogether unappreciated. My stock consists in part of a full line of

DRESS GOODS, WHITE GOODS,
AND
STAPLE COTTONS

of every description. A full line of

Pontiac & Bloomington Flannels,

which must and will be sold at

Bottom Figures.

Pants stuffs, Jeans, of the best quality, and very low Tickings, Denims, Stripe Shirtings and a full line of Notions, Trimmings and Ribbons, Nublas, Woolen Hoods, beautiful new style Double Shawls. The attention of the ladies is earnestly solicited to the above department.

In connection I also keep a full line of

BOOTS AND SHOES,

Of the best make, at VERY LOW PRICES.

Also, a heavy stock of all kinds of

Groceries,
Crockery,
Earthenware,
Woodenware,
Baskets, etc.,

All are respectfully invited to call and examine my stock, as it is considered a pleasure as well as a duty on the part of my salesmen to show goods to all who may favor them with a call.

I also tender my sincere thanks to my friends who have bestowed upon me such liberal patronage for the past two years, and hope I may still continue to merit the same.

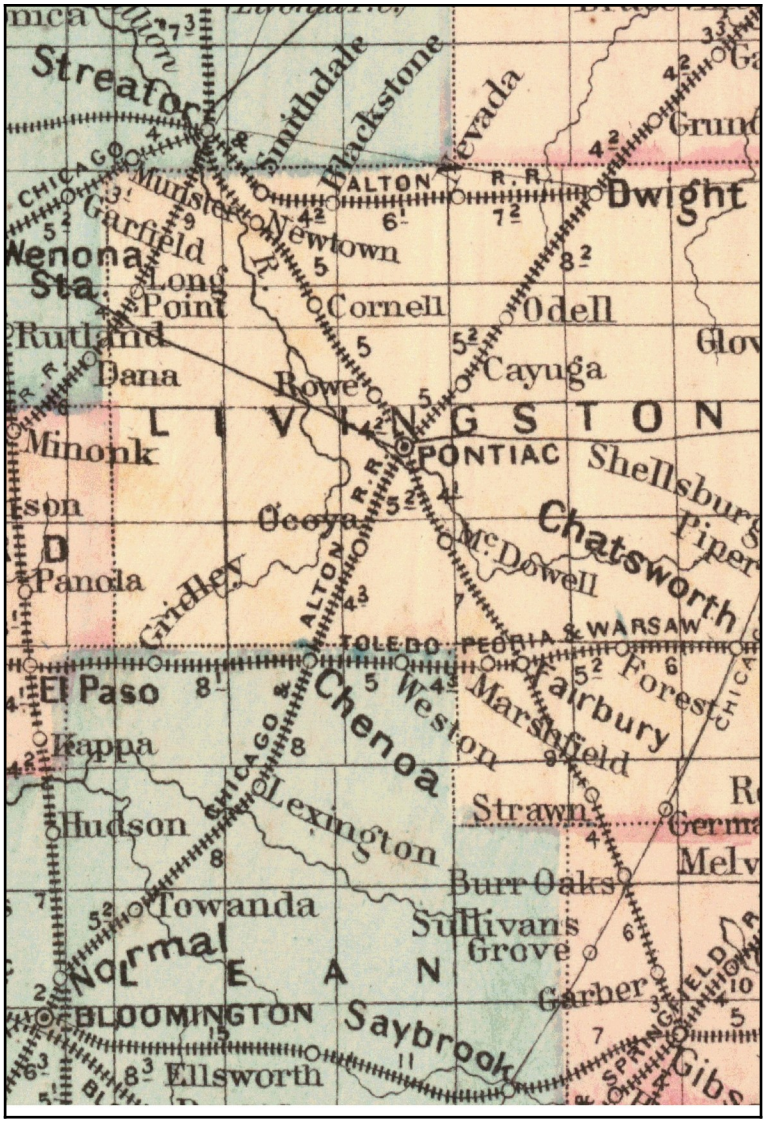
JOHN DEHNER.

N. B. - All kinds Country Produce taken in exchange for Goods. Call at 39, west side of the court house square, next door to the Bank.

Pontiac, Illinois, October 4th, 1871

1875 Railroad Map Showing Two Railroads Going Through Pontiac

This map shows the Chicago & Alton railroad built in 1854. It also shows the Chicago & Paducah Railroad built in 1872. The branch from Fairbury to Strawn was removed around 1874. The TP&W was run through Fairbury in 1857.



1875 Railroad Map

John Dehner Mentioned in Old Settlers' Association Poem in 1875

In 1875, John Dehner was 71 years old. Many of the first pioneers of Livingston County had begun to die off.

According to the 1878 Livingston County history book, local citizens decided to form and Old Settlers' Association. Franklin Oliver is mentioned in the poem that was written in honor of their first meeting.

> **Old Settlers' Association**
>
> In the year 1875, when the new Court House was completed, it was determined by the old settlers throughout the county that a grand re-union should be held and the new building dedicated. A preliminary meeting was called at the fair grounds early in the Fall of the year, at which C. B. Ostrander presided and John A. Fellows was appointed Secretary.
>
> The 30th of December was the day fixed upon for the re-union, and committees of arrangements were appointed in every township in the county. On the day appointed, the old settlers turned out en mass. Tables, capable of seating fifteen-hundred people, had been prepared by the citizens of Pontiac, and these were all filled. James McDowell was the President of the day, and John Fellows, Secretary. An address of welcome was delivered by Nathaniel J. Pillsbury. Letters were read from Judge Treat, who held the first term of court in Pontiac and from Hon. David Davis and Jesse W. Fell. O. F. Pearre, who had been requested to furnish a poem for the occasion, read the following poem.
>
> **ADDRESS TO THE OLD SETTLERS OF LIVINGSTON**
>
> One hundred years ago today,
> The British troops in Boston lay;
> Our sires then hardly thought that they
> Would found a Nation
> Whose ships would whiten many seas,
> Whose flag should float on every breeze,
> Whose armies could maintain with ease
> Her lofty station.
>
> And in that hundred years ago,
> The deer, the wolf, the buffalo,
> At will went roaming to and fro
> Where now our county
> Spreads out one vast and fertile plain
> Of golden corn and waving grain,
> Rejoicing 'neath a constant rain
> Of Heaven's bounty.
>
> Yea, men now sitting in this hall

In mem'ry can the time recall
When nature brooded over all;
When was unbroken
The solitude that wrapped the land
Where now our smiling cities stand,
When silence reigned on every hand
And gave no token.

Save by the hooting of the owl,
The clanger of the water fowl,
The red deer's signal or the howl
Of gray wolf, weary
In searching for his scanty food,
Save where, perhaps, some cabin rude
Seemed on the lonely scene to brood,
And served to point the solitude
So lone and dreary.

Oliver, Cummings, these can tell,
Wilson, McDowell and Darnell;
John Johnson knows the story well,
The quaint old story;
How Chief Shabbona and his band
Kindled their camp fires on the strand
Of fair Vermilion, when the land
Stood robed by virgin Nature's hand
In pristine glory.

Peace to thy shade; Shabbona, rest:
A warm, true heart beat in thy breast;
The white man's friend you stood confessed,
Among the bravest, truest, best
Of those we mention.
Thy name deserves a worthy place,
Brave chieftain of a warlike race,
Hist'ry accords thee little space;
I would more worthy pen could trace,
Thy fame, and, with befitting grace.
Thy virtues mention.

But, ah what mighty change has passed
Since the brave Chief Shabbona last
Upon the stage his vision cast.
What grandeur looming.
Is this through which Vermilion flows
From early morn to evening's close;
Through towns and farms the trav'ler goes,
Where fifty thousand souls repose;
The desert blossoms like the Rose
Of Sharon blooming.

Not Homer in his valiant crew
Could mention more good men and true;
McMillen, Breckenridge and Blue,
McDowell and Tuttle, Campbell, too,
And other worthies not a few.
Ye pioneers, it is to you
The debut of gratitude is due;
Ye builded wiser than ye knew
The broad foundation
On which our superstructure stands;
Your strong right arms and willing hands,
Your earnest effort still commands
Our veneration.

And you, who yet upon the shore
Of Time remain, strike hands once more,
To-day recount your trials o'er.
Repeat to us, from out your store,
The legions and the early lore.
Repeating
The name of Rummery, he who found
That famous railroad under ground;
Then pass the name of Corey round,
Cornell and Sprague, their praises sound;
Ladd, Dehner, Fellows, Fyfe, profound
On finance, Spafford, such names sound
In greeting.

We point to you, old friends, and say
The heat and burden of the day
You bore, and in an earnest way
We meet you,
Well pleased, indeed, to see you stand
On this glad day, a gallant band
Whose hands have wrought, whose brains have planned
Such vast improvements in the land;
With beating heart and open hand,
We greet you!

Joseph Dehner Declares Bankruptcy in 1875

The August 26, 1875, Chicago Daily Tribune published the following article about the bankruptcy of Joseph Dehner.

> August 26, 1875
> Chicago Daily Tribune
>
> **BANKRUPTCY ITEMS**
>
> Richards, Shaw, Fitch & Winslow, on a claim for $1,115.87, and Phelps, Dodge & Palmer claiming $215, united in filing a petition in bankruptcy against Joseph A. Dehner, a merchant of Pontiac, Ill. It is charged that the debtor gave a warrant to confess judgment in favor of the Livingston County National Bank, under which his goods were seized. A rule to show cause Sept. 2 was issued.

The total debt involved according to this article was $1,331. This amount in 1875 would be equivalent to $37,242 in today's dollars.

John Dehner Suffers Loss When Chenoa Mill Burned in 1875

The September 8, 1875, edition of the Chicago Daily Tribune published the article below about the fire in Chenoa.

> September 8, 1875
> Chicago Daily Tribune
>
> **AT CHENOA, ILL.**
>
> Pontiac, Livingston County, Ill., Sept. 7 —Dehner & Zeiglar's mill at Chenoa was burned last night about 8 o'clock. It is supposed to be the work of an incendiary, as no fire was left in the mill.
>
> The loss is not far from $15,000 to $16,000; insured for $8,000. Mr. Dehner is a resident of this city, and this is the second time the mill has been burned. The Fire Department of Bloomington was telegraphed for, and promptly responded with one of their steamers, but too late to save the mill. It probably will not be rebuilt, as Mr. Dehner is about to leave the country.

John Dehner lost a net of about $8,000 if the insurance paid him $8,000 against the $16,000 loss. This loss of $8,000 in 1875 would be equivalent to $224,000 in today's dollars.

John Dehner Also Did Business in Chenoa

The 1879 History of McLean County book published information about John Dehner doing business in Chenoa.

> After Louis Zeigler revisited his native country (Germany), in 1873, in company with John Dehner, of Pontiac, purchased the Chenoa Flour Mill, and ran it till 1876, when that was destroyed by fire.

See the 1875 Chicago Daily Tribune article above for more information about the Chenoa fires.

John Dehner and Sawmill in Cornell

The May 10, 1876 Pantagraph published a story about John Dehner possibly building a sawmill in Cornell.

> **PONTIAC.**
>
> If the people of Cornell will give the ground and $1,000, John Dehner will build a $8,000 mill. And who wouldn't? Its probable the people won't give that $1,000 and lot to Dehner tomorrow.

Note that $1,000 in 1876 would be equivalent to $28,211 in today's dollars. The $8,000 cost of the mill would be equivalent to $225,000 in today's dollars.

John Dehner Helped in Effort to Have New State Asylum Built in Pontiac

The State of Illinois created many different mental health and reformatories in the era of the 1870s. In 1877, a book was published with the title of ***Reports Made to the General Assembly of Illinois at the Thirtieth Regular Session.***

The Table of Contents in this book listed facilities that were already built and facilities planned to be built. A list of these facilities is shown below.

> Southern Hospital for the Insane
> Commissioners to Construct the Southern Hospital for the Insane
> Asylum for Feeble Minded Children
> Institution for the Blind
> Soldier's Orphan's Home
> Charitable Eye and Ear Infirmary
> State Reform School
> Institution for the Deaf and Dumb

The State Reform School referred to in the Table of Contents was the Boy's Reformatory at Pontiac. The trustees of this institution presented their report for the period from December 1, 1874 through September 30, 1876.

The State of Illinois passed legislation authorizing a new asylum for feeble minded children. The Commissioners for this project asked cities in Illinois to send in bids for land they would offer to have this facility built on. A list of the lands offered and the prices for this land are included in the Appendix section of this book. This Appendix is titled ***Report of the Board of Commissioners Appointed by the Governor to Select a Site and Plans for the Illinois Asylum for Feeble-Minded Children***.

The bids submitted by Pontiac are shown below.

Wm. Gore, 80 acres for $3,000.
Wm. Gore, 100 acres for $4,000.
Wm. Gore, 120 acres for $5,500.
John Dehner, 80 acres for $3,000.
John Dehner, 100 acres for $3,500.
John Dehner, 120 acres for $5,000.
John Dehner, 160 acres for $7,500.
John Dehner, 200 acres for $10,000.
John Dehner, 215 acres, per acre, $70.
S. C. Crane, 40 to 160 acres, per acre $100.
A. Weider, 80 acres, per acre, $90.

During the site selection process, the commissioners held a meeting at the Phoenix Hotel in Pontiac. After the meeting, the Commissioners visited the existing Boy's Reformatory facility in Pontiac.

Pontiac Was Not Chosen for New Facility

Unfortunately for Livingston County, the Commissioners finally selected Lincoln, Illinois, in Logan County, to be the site for the new asylum.

REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES.

HON. JOHN L. BEVERIDGE, *Governor of Illinois.*

SIR:—Having been appointed by your Excellency as trustees of the Illinois Asylum for Feeble Minded Children, and having been convened by your order at Springfield, August 26th, 1875, after being duly qualified, the board was organized by the election of Graham Lee as president, and the continuance of the superintendent of the asylum as secretary.

The act passed by the twenty-ninth general assembly, making appropriations for land and for the construction of buildings for this asylum, approved April 8th, 1875, provided that a board of seven commissioners should select a site and farm for said buildings, of not less than forty acres of land, and further directed and required said board to cause to be prepared suitable plans and specifications by a competent architect, in accordance with the first section of the act.

After a careful survey of the state, visiting nearly every place to which they were invited, the board of commissioners selected and contracted with Messrs. Latham & Wyatt, of Lincoln, Logan county, for forty acres of land, for the sum of seven thousand, five hundred dollars, and notified the board of trustees of that fact by letter, on the 26th of August, 1875.

John Dehner Family Moves to Missouri in 1878

The January 11, 1878 Pantagraph published a notice saying that John Dehner was moving to Missouri.

> "Uncle" John Dehner has bought a farm in southwest Missouri, and expects to go there in March.

John Dehner Sold His Land in Chenoa

The June 18, 1878 Pantagraph reported that John Dehner sold his land in Chenoa.

> —John Dehner and wife to Daniel E. Eglar, warranty deed, dated August 17, 1877. Consideration, $1,000. Conveys lot 3 and part lot 2, block 4, Matthew T. Scott's 2nd addition in Chenoa.

In 1878, John Dehner was 71 years of age. His wife, Jane Dehner, was 79 years of age.

John Dehner Not Missing

The September 6, 1878 Pantagraph published the story below.

> A recent report that "Uncle" John Dehner (now of Missouri) had disappeared from his home, seems to be contradicted. He is said to have only gone to Hot Springs for his health.

Jane Dehner Dies in Missouri in 1879

Jane Jones, wife of John Dehner, died on October 10, 1879, in Carthage, Missouri. Mrs. Dehner was 80 years of age when she died. Husband John Dehner was 72 years old when his wife died.

1880 U.S. Census

In this Census, John Dehner was 73 years of age and lived in Duval, Missouri, in Jasper County. John was a widower and he listed his occupation as farmer. Children living in the household were Florance Dehner, 20, John Dehner, 18, Kate Dehner, 15, Warren Dehner, 13, Carlton Dehner, 5, and Frank Dehner, 2.

These children were the children of Joseph and Mary Dehner, but they are not listed as living in this household for the Census.

Joseph and Mary Dehner had a separate entry in this Census. They lived in Duval, Missouri. Joseph listed his occupation as farmer. Joseph and Mary Dehner reported they were each 40 years old.

It is unknown why there were separate census entries for Joseph Dehner and his children.

John Dehner Dies in Missouri in 1880

Just 11 months after his wife died, John Dehner died on September 24, 1880, in Pierce City, Missouri at the age of 73. He was buried in Park Cemetery in Carthage, Missouri.

The October 13, 1880, Pontiac Sentinel, published the following information about the death of John Dehner.

> October 13, 1880
> Pontiac Sentinel
>
> **Suicide of John Dehner**
>
> Our citizens were shocked and pained last week to learn that an old German man who had committed suicide in a Missouri hotel was none other than our old fellow citizen, John Dehner.
>
> In years agone no man occupied a better position than he did. He was one of the pioneers; he made considerable money here in business; erected Dehner Hall; was President of the Town Board, and always a prominent merchant and business man.
>
> But he became involved some years ago in financial difficulties; lost some money in a mill in Chenoa, and some more "on change" in Chicago.
>
> His oldest son, Joe, caused him some financial trouble and worriness of mind later on in life, and some three year ago he removed his family to Missouri, hoping that Joe would do better if removed from his old temptations. Troubles continued to grow on the old man, his wife died about a year ago, and his mind became somewhat impaired. At last he ended his eventful and stirring life by taking a dose of poison, dying a stranger in a strange land. The following extract from a letter of Joe Dehner to Mr. H. G. Greenbaum will cast some light on the affair:
>
> Carthage, Mo., Oct. 7th, 1880
>
> H. G. Greenbaum — Dear Sir: I am sorry to have to inform you of the sad death of my father. He came to Carthage on the 8th of September with me and my wife and on the morning of the 9th we went home. He said he was not well enough to ride, and would stay in Carthage a day or two with uncle Thomas Hill, who promised to bring him out on the Saturday following in a buggy. He left Hill's the same day, and the next thing we heard of him was at Pierce City, where he died on the 24th.
>
> We did not know he was dead until Oct. 5th. He had nothing with him to identify him, and registered as H. Floyd. We have had many reverses since

coming here, the blame of all of which the public are ready to shoulder on me, and now this, the saddest and worst of all, will, no doubt, be added to the load. I should much prefer that everything should be brought out in the broad sunlight of heaven, and all the truth should be fully known, than to have friends who will hold me to account in any way for things which I had no power to control.

Truly Yours,
Jos. A. Dehner

Mary Dehner Dies in Missouri in 1882

Mary Dehner, wife of Joseph Dehner, died in Jasper County, Missouri in 1882. She was 42 years of age when she died. She was buried in Park Cemetery in Carthage, Missouri.

On March 3, 1880, the Pontiac Sentinel published the following death notice for Mary Dehner.

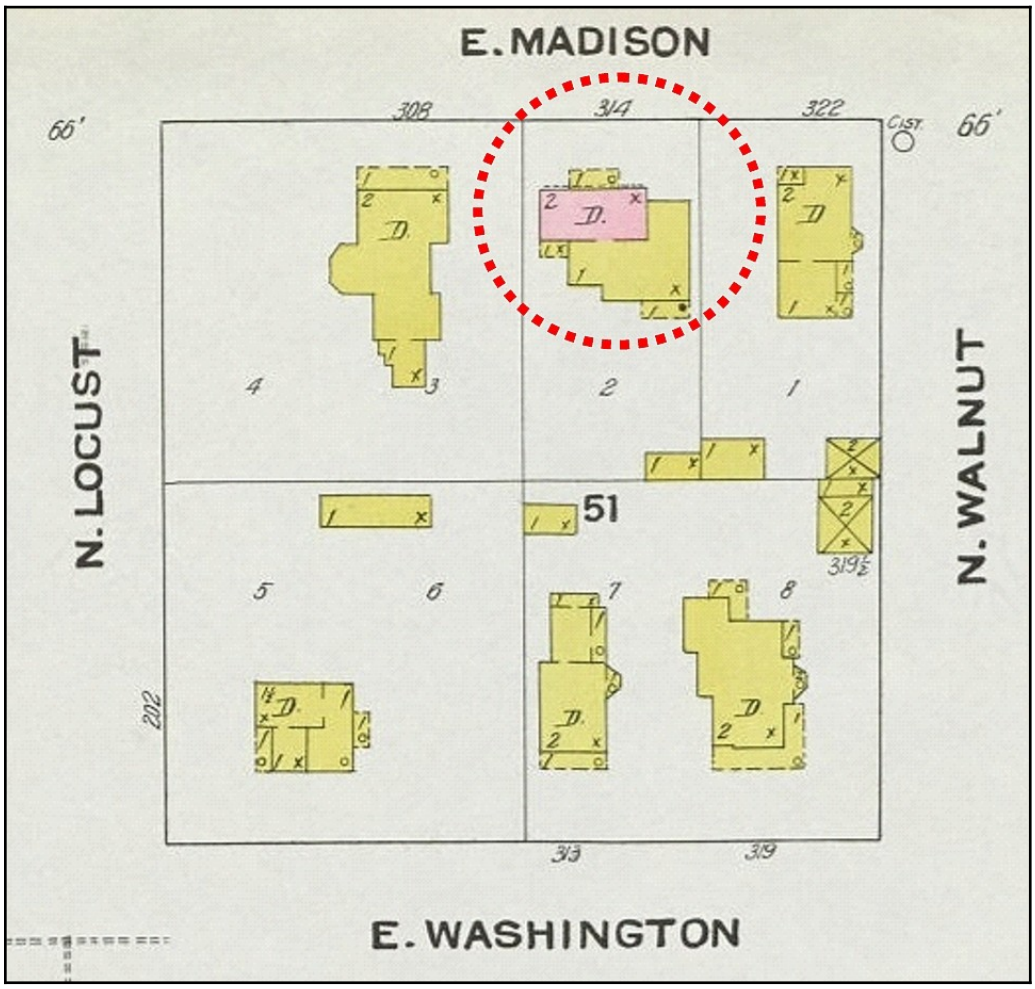
> Pontiac Sentinel
> March 3, 1882
>
> **Death of Mrs. Jos. Dehner**
>
> In a letter received here a few days ago by Miss Nettie Babcock from Miss Kitty Dehner the sad news is conveyed of the death of Mrs. Jos. Dehner who went from here to Missouri three years ago with her family. Mrs. Dehner was called to Carthage, Missouri in September last to attend her father's funeral and while there was taken seriously ill. She remained there some three months, cancer, and dropsy developing meanwhile, and was taken to Eureka Springs, Arkansas, and seemed to be improving at first, but then failed rapidly and died Feb. 10th. She suffered very greatly during her last illness but bore her trials with Christian fortitude. Mrs. Dehner was raised in the family of Thomas Hill and was quite well known in Pontiac. She leaves a husband and two little girls to mourn her departure.

Sanborn Maps of Pontiac

The Sanborn Insurance Company made six different maps of Pontiac. The 1888, 1892, 1897, and 1903 Sanborn maps do not show the Jones House. The 1910 and 1923 maps do show the Jones House. These two maps are shown below.

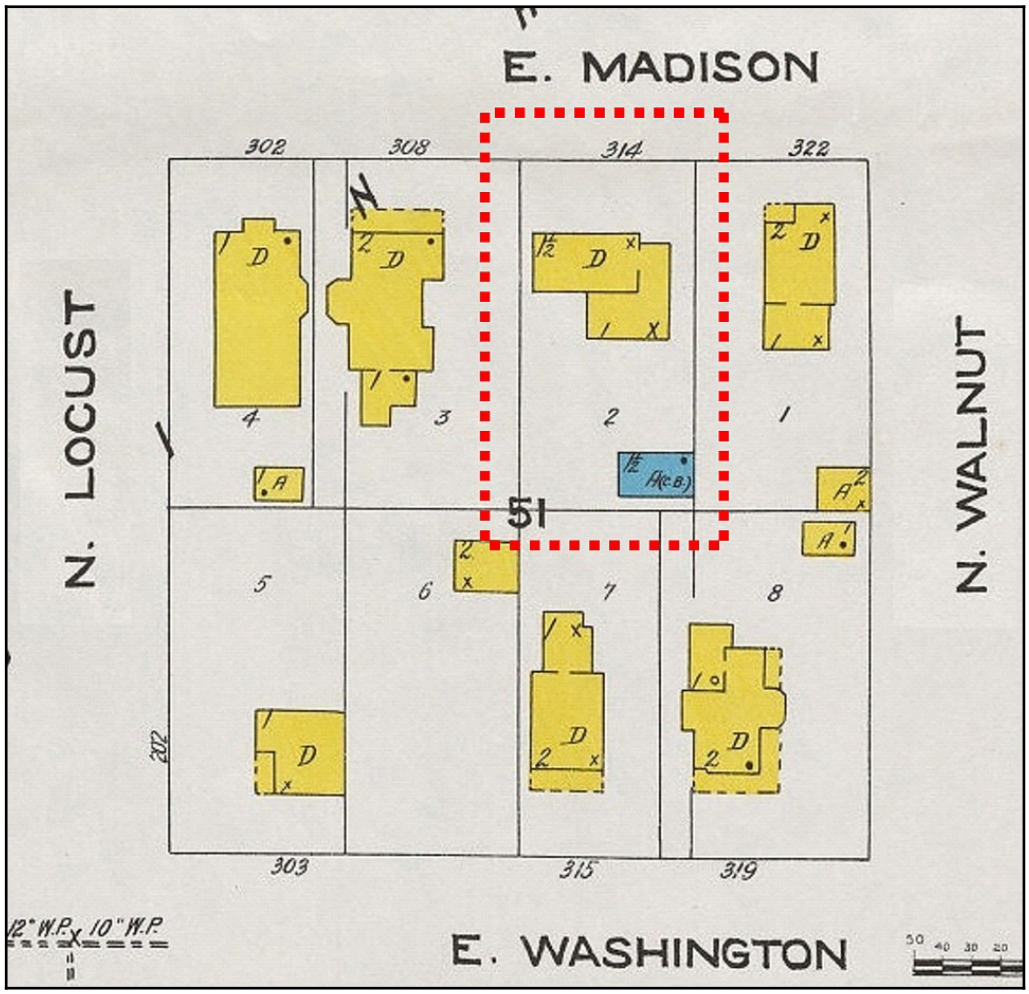
1910 Sanborn Map

This Sanborn map does show the Jones House at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac.



It appears as if there was a large porch which ran east of the house and behind the house. On the 1910 map, the Sanborn Insurance Company colored brick structures pink. Wood structures were colored in yellow.

1923 Sanborn Map



This map also shows a large porch at the southeast corner of the house.

1900 U.S. Census

In this Census, Joseph Dehner was 60 years old and lived in Mineral, Missouri, in Jasper County. His marital status was widowed. Joseph's occupation was listed as pool hall proprietor. Joseph lived with his 24 year old son Carlton Dehner.

1910 U.S. Census

No specific entry could be found for Joseph Dehner.

1920 U. S. Census

In this Census, Joseph Dehner was 79 years old and was living with his son Frank Dehner, in Omaha, Nebraska.

Joseph Dehner Dies in Oklahoma in 1922

His obit appeared in the May 24, 1922 edition of the Pittsburgh, Kansas, Sun newspaper.

> May 24, 1922
> Pittsburg, Kansas
>
> **Aged Visitor Dies Here**
>
> Joseph A. Dehner, aged 82 years, died yesterday morning at 2:40 at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Jennie Crowell, 410 North Fairview street, with whom he had been visiting the past three weeks. Mr. Dehner lived at Pauls Valley, Oklahoma.
>
> Besides his daughter, Mrs. Crowell, he is survived by six other children: Mrs. J. W. Brown, Kansas City; Mrs. J. D. Hill, Pauls Valley, Okla., J. H. Dehner, Streator, IL.; W. E. Dehner, East Alton, Okla.; F. R. Dehner, Omaha, Neb., and C. C. Dehner, Wichita.
>
> Funeral services will be held this afternoon at 1:30 o'clock at the home, conducted by Dr. Wilbur N. Mason. The body will be shipped to Carthage, Mo., for burial.

The FindAGrave.com website has a photo of his grave stone. He was buried in Park Cemetery in Carthage, Missouri. His wife is buried with him.

CHAPTER 4

The 1810 to 1847 Jones Family Era

Family Tree of Judge Henry Jones and Son Henry C. Jones

In early Livingston County history, there were two different Jones families. Judge Henry Jones and his son Henry C. Jones came to Livingston County around 1846.

Charles Stephen Jones came to Livingston County earlier in 1836.

Exhaustive genealogical research could not identify who the parents of Judge Henry Jones were. At this time, it does not appear that pioneer settler Charles S. Jones was the father of Judge Henry Jones.

Judge Henry Jones was close friends and a business partner with Edwin Charles Jones, son of Charles S. Jones. For this reason, the family tree of pioneer settler Charles S. Jones will be included in this chapter.

In the ***Unsolved Mysteries*** future chapter, the relationship between Judge Henry Jones and pioneer settler Charles S. Jones will be further explored.

Henry Jones Background

Henry Jones was born around 1812 in Cincinnati in Hamilton County, Ohio. Unfortunately the parents of Henry Jones can not be identified at this time.

Henry Jones married Emily DeMoss on March 10, 1831, in Fayette County, Indiana. Cincinnati is about 45 miles southeast of Fayette County. A paper copy of their marriage certificate is still on file in the Fayette County Courthouse. Unfortunately, this certificate does not include the names of the parents of Henry Jones.

Emily DeMoss was born in 1810 in Flemingsburg, Kentucky. Flemingsburg is about 100 miles southeast of Cincinnati. She was the daughter of James H. DeMoss Sr. (1786-1852) and Nancy Hamilton (1786-1853). Mr. DeMoss was another pioneer settler of Livingston County and he arrived in 1841.

Henry Jones was about 19 and Emily DeMoss was 21 years of age when they married.

Map of Ohio and Indiana Counties

There were one Ohio county and two Indiana counties involved with the life story of Henry and Emily Jones. A map of these three counties is shown below.

Number of Children Born to Henry and Emily Jones

The number of children born to Henry and Emily Jones is not precisely known. In the 1840 U.S. Census, Henry and Emily Jones had four girls and one boy living with them in Hamilton County, Indiana. Unfortunately, that Census only required the full name of the head of the household. The names of the children are not known.

In the 1850 U.S. Census, Henry Jones was looking in California for gold. Henry reported his age as 38 and he lived in Shasta, California, with three other men.

Emily Jones, wife of Henry Jones lived with her parents in Livingston County while her husband was in California. The Jones children that were living in this household and their ages reported in the 1850 Census is shown below.

Rebecca Jones age 17.

Martha Jones, age 16.

Matilda Jones, age 15.

Elvina Jones, age 10.

Henry C. Jones, age 12.

John Jones, age seven.

James Jones, age zero.

When Judge Henry Jones died in 1893 in Shasta, California, his obituary reported that Henry and Emily Jones had three girls and one boy. Obituaries often do not mention children that died before the parent died.

When Henry C. Jones, son of Henry and Emily Jones, died in 1921, the obituary reported there were two boys and three girls in the Henry and Emily Jones family.

The birth information about seven of the children of Henry and Emily Jones is shown below.

Rebecca Jones was born in 1833 in Indiana. She died sometime before 1912.

Martha A. Jones was born on February 25, 1834, in Hamilton County, Indiana. She died on January 23, 1912, in Pontiac.

Malinda Jane Jones was born in 1835 in Hamilton County, Indiana. She died on May 23, 1909, in Shasta, California.

Henry C. Jones was born on February 11, 1838, in Hamilton County, Indiana. He died on June 13, 1921, in Pontiac.

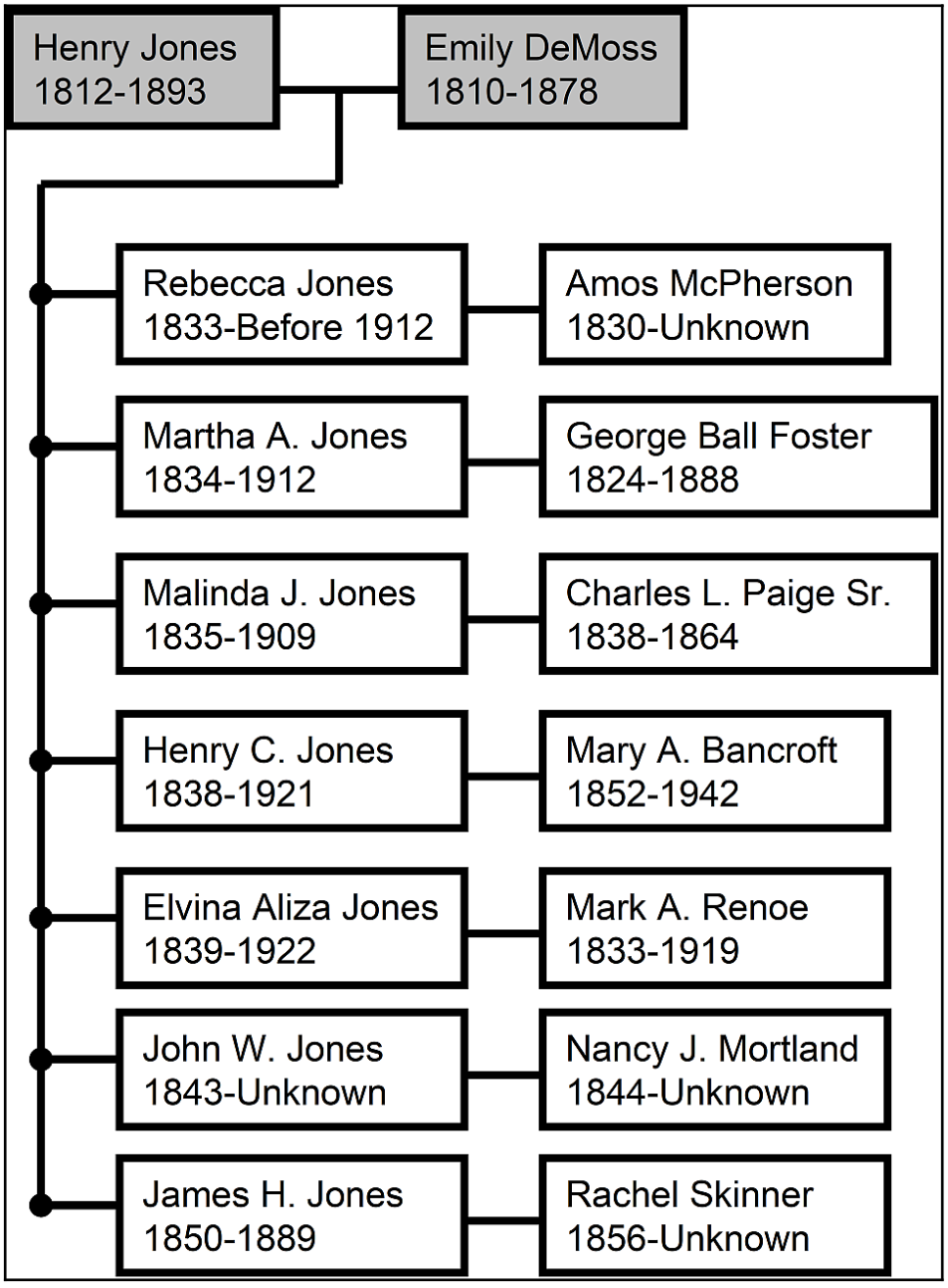
Elvina Aliza Jones was born on May 1, 1839, in Indiana. She died on March 16, 1922, in Clay City, Illinois.

John W. Jones was born in 1843 in Bellevue, Iowa, in Jackson County. His death date is unknown.

James H. Jones was born in February of 1850 in Pontiac, Illinois. He died March 16, 1922, in Shasta, California.

Family Tree of Henry and Emily Jones

Assuming they had seven children, their family tree is shown below.



DeMoss Family

The wife of Henry Jones was Emily DeMoss. She was the daughter of James H. DeMoss Sr. (1786-1852) and Nancy Hamilton (1786-1853). Mr. DeMoss was another pioneer settler of Livingston County.

The James and Nancy DeMoss family lived in Ohio, Kentucky, and Indiana. In 1831, the family was living in Hamilton County, Indiana. Henry Jones likely met Emily DeMoss when he was living in Hamilton County, Indiana. Henry Jones and Emily DeMoss married in Indiana in 1831.

The James and Nancy DeMoss family came to Livingston County in 1841. It is likely that the Henry and Emily Jones family came a few years later to Livingston County because Emily's family was living there already.

The following story was researched and written by the author. It was published on FairburyNews.Net in 2023. The story gives a brief history of the role of the DeMoss family in Livingston County history and is shown below.

DeMoss Family Early Pioneers

By: Dale C. Maley
For: FairburyNews. Net
Published: August 14, 2023

The DeMoss family was among the early pioneer families to settle in Livingston County. The story of this family began with the birth of James Henry DeMoss Sr. in 1786 in West Virginia. James H. DeMoss Sr. was the son of John K. DeMoss (1755-1814) and Martha LaHuff (1794-1852).

In 1808, James H. DeMoss married Nancy Hamilton in Ohio. James and Nancy were both 22 years of age when they married. James and Nancy DeMoss had nine children.

The War of 1812 lasted from 1812 until 1815 and was fought by the United States of America and the United Kingdom. James H. DeMoss was 26 years of age when this War began in 1812. James H. DeMoss served as a Private in Captain Joseph Rockhold's Company from Ross County, Ohio.

According to the 1878 Livingston County history book by LeBaron, John K. DeMoss, father of James H. DeMoss Sr., originally came from Virginia and settled at the mouth of the Miami River in Ohio and helped to build a fort there. In 1814, near the end of the War of 1812, John K. DeMoss was killed by Native Americans. John K. DeMoss was 58 when he was killed in Ohio.

Livingston County was formed in 1837. In 1841, the James and Nancy DeMoss family relocated to Avoca Township, north of present-day Fairbury. James H. DeMoss Sr. was 55 when he moved his family to Avoca Township.

In September 1847, the Livingston County Court contracted with Henry Jones, J. H. DeMoss, and Philip Rollings to build a bridge over the river at Pontiac for $450. The three men proceeded to build the bridge. Unfortunately, in March of 1849, a freshet carried the new bridge away, according to the 1878 Livingston County history book by LeBaron. A freshet is a great rise or overflowing of a stream caused by heavy rains or melted snow. Mr. Rollings and Mr. DeMoss were ordered to save what they could of the new bridge and rebuild it.

James H. DeMoss Sr. built the first grain mill in Pontiac and helped build the first courthouse in Livingston County. He died in 1852 at the age of 66. His wife, Nancy DeMoss, died in 1853 at the age of 67. James H. DeMoss Sr. and his wife, Nancy DeMoss, were buried in the Patty Cemetery southeast of Pontiac.

Between 1830 when Valentine Darnell became the first settler in the area, and 1852, very few families lived in Livingston County. Central Illinois was swampland, and it had no railroads. In 1850, Congress passed a script law that gave primarily veterans of the War of 1812 free land in Illinois. Most of these veterans had no interest in moving to the swamps of Illinois. These veterans sold their land rights for about 30 cents an acre, well below the official federal government land price of $2.50 per acre. The 1850 law created a stampede of new settlers into Livingston County between 1852 and 1860.

Because there were relatively few families living in Livingston County in that era, the children of the early pioneer settlers had no choice but to marry the children of other early pioneer settlers.

Sanford Sparks (1808-1859) was one of the early settlers in Avoca Township. Alexander DeMoss (1810-1880) was one of the sons of James and Nancy DeMoss. Alexander DeMoss married Sarah Sparks, one of the daughters of Sanford Sparks. William DeMoss (1828-1895), another son of James and Nancy DeMoss, married Charlotte A. Sparks (1829-1910), another daughter of Sanford Sparks.

James H. DeMoss Jr. (1808-1852), son of James H. DeMoss Sr., married Margaret Nace (1809-1868). One of the daughters of James and Margaret DeMoss, Emily DeMoss (1848-1905), married Thomas "Wiley" Sparks (1846-1930), who was the son of Sanford Sparks. One of the sons of

James and Margaret DeMoss, Henry J. DeMoss (1830-1905), married Mary A. Popejoy (1932-1889), daughter of early Livingston County settler Nathan Popejoy (1784-1845).

Leander DeMoss (1869-1942) was a great-grandson of James H. DeMoss Sr. He married Olive Sparks (1871-1959), who was the daughter of Wiley Sparks.

In 1878, six different DeMoss families were living in Fairbury. These included Thomas, Asa, William, Levi, James H., and Henry DeMoss.

Tragedy struck a descendant of James H. DeMoss Sr. in 1924. Fifteen-year-old Thelma Lucile DeMoss was the daughter of Leander DeMoss (1869-1942) and Olive J. Sparks (1871-1959). Thelma and two girlfriends decided to swim across the Munz sandpit located in the present-day Indian Creek Golf Course. The three girls crossed the pond and decided to swim back. Thelma did not make it back across and disappeared below the water. Rescuers found her body, but she could not be revived. Thelma was the great-great-granddaughter of James H. DeMoss Sr.

Another descendant of James H. DeMoss Sr. was Beatrice DeMoss. She was another great-great-granddaughter of James H. DeMoss Sr. Beatrice married Philip Tetley (1906-1956). Bea and her husband managed two restaurants, the Crossroads Cafe in Forrest and the Honegger House Hotel and Cafe in Fairbury. Later, she was employed by the National Bank of Fairbury for 25 years, retiring in 1979. Bea Tetley died in 2014 at the age of 96.

In the early phases of Fairbury area history, the DeMoss name was one of the most common names in the area. Although the DeMoss name has almost disappeared in current events, the family has made significant contributions to the development of the Fairbury area since 1841.

Pioneer Settler Charles S. Jones in Livingston County.

Charles Stephen Jones (1797-1885) was one of the pioneer settlers in Livingston County. Charles S. Jones arrived in Livingston County in 1836 and initially settled in what is now Forrest, Illinois. He married Mary E. Hopkinson who died in 1841.

This family can be traced back to the member of the Jones family who first came to the Connecticut Colony in 1657 from England using Ancestry.com The family tree from Ancestry.com is shown below.

Ebenezer W. Jones (1590-1655) and Rebekah Pease (1600-1681)

Cornelius Jones (1621-1690) and Ezbel Hyatt (1625-1681)

Joseph Jones (1652-1690) and Rebecca Drake (1654-1706)

Joseph Jones (1682-1751) and Hannah Lewis (1678-1732)

Samuel Jones (1709-1764) and Elizabeth Morris (1708-1750)

John Jones (1736-1806) and Abigail Peck (1743-1820)

Moses Jones (1762-1835) and Maria Scott (1770-1848)

Charles S. Jones (1797-1885) and Mary E. Hopkinson (died 1841)

Charles S. Jones First Member of Family to Come to Livingston County

Charles S. Jones was one of the pioneer settlers of Livingston County in 1836. The 1878 history book recounts this fact.

FORREST TOWNSHIP.

Forrest lies in the southeastern part of the county, and is bounded on the north by the township of Pleasant Ridge, on the east by Chatsworth, on the south by Fayette and on the west by Indian Grove. It is all prairie, except a narrow belt of timber along the south branch of the Vermilion River, which flows across the northeast corner of the town. The prairie portion, however, has been supplied with timber sufficient, through the energies and industry of man, for shelter from the burning rays of a Summer sun and the piercing blasts of the Winter storms. Beautiful groves are found in all parts of the town in such plenitude that, should the ghosts of Shabbona, Pontiac, Saunemin or any of their dusky warriors leave their" happy hunting grounds" for a visit to the scenes of their youth, they would, doubtless, find more changes in this section than did Rip Van Winkle in

the little village among the Catskill Mountains after his twenty years' slumber.

Where, a few years ago, grew the tall grass, the willows and rosin-weeds, now flourish the corn and other crops of the thrifty farmer; while little artificial groves of trees here and there relieve the level surface of the monotonous aspect borne by the prairies in their natural state.

Much of the land in Forrest was denominated "swamp lands," and donated by the State to Livingston County, and hence, through this means, this section obtained rather a hard name abroad, and was for years avoided, save in the little skirt of timber along the river; when, after a few years of efficient drainage and good farming, these lands have become as productive and as well adapted to agricultural purposes as those of any portion of the county; and, with two railroads - the Toledo, Peoria & Warsaw and the Chicago &Paducah intersecting it, the town has every facility for moving the vast amount of grain and stock produced annually within its limits.

The first actual settlement made in the territory now embraced in Forrest Township was by Charles Jones. He came from Bordentown, N. J., and entered the land where the village of Forrest now stands in 1836, and remained there about seven years, when he sold out his claim and improvements to James Beard and removed into Pontiac Township. After remaining in Pontiac several years he at last removed into Belle Prairie Township. Having lost his eyesight and become almost totally blind, with the weight of fourscore years resting upon him, he lives with his children, quietly waiting for his summons home. His wife died in 1841.

His recollection is still good as to the early privations endured in settling in the wilderness. Mr. Jones relates an instance of going to Chicago with a load of produce, some forty years ago, and glutting the egg market there with a few barrels of eggs, and was compelled to throw away a part of them. Chicago, as well as Forrest Township, has grown and expanded somewhat since that day.

The 1878 history book also lists Charles Jones as one of the pioneer settlers of Livingston County.

> Among some of the earliest settlers were Truman Rutherford, John Foster, James Holman, William K. Brown, Judge Breckenridge, Amos Edwards and Andrew McDowell, of Long Point; Walter Cornell, Andrew Sprague, Joel B. Anderson, H. Steers, Isaac Burgit, John Darnall, John Travis, J. W. Reynolds, Charles Jones, Philip Rollins, John Marks, James DeMoss, Benjamin Hieronymous and the Garner brothers.

Edwin Charles Jones was Friend of Judge Henry Jones

One of the sons of Charles Jones was Edwin Charles Jones (1826-1889). An obituary for Edwin Charles Jones was published in the Fairbury Blade newspaper on September 7, 1889. The obituary describes the conditions in early Livingston County when the Charles Jones family settled in the Forrest area. The article also recounts that Edwin C. Jones was a business partner of Judge Henry Jones.

> September 7, 1889
> Fairbury Blade
>
> **A Pioneer Dead**
>
> Edwin Charles Jones died at his home near Oregon City, Oregon, at 11 p.m., August 20, 1889. He was born in Bordentown, New Jersey, in 1826 and came with his father's family to Livingston County in 1837, locating where now stands the good town of Forrest, then known as Jones Grove, afterwards Beards Grove and Kracks Grove, after the Honorable I. J. Krack, who laid out the town on the completion of the TP&W in 1858 and 1859.
>
> In 1852, in company with Henry Jones (afterwards County Judge of Livingston County) John and Theodore Popejoy, he started to California with ox teams. After the usual six months trip, he arrived in California, and engaged in gold mining, in the placer mines, near Shasta. In 1855 he returned from California, bringing with him, something over $4,000 in gold, which was then considered quite a fortune. He was married this year to Miss Mary Cook, of Racine, Wisconsin. Still remaining a partner of Judge Jones, they engaged in mercantile business in Pontiac, erecting for the purpose the first brick store put up in the city, which is still standing, being afterwards owned by Captain Turner.

About the time of the Pike Peak gold excitement, 1858, they closed out their store. Judge Jones (who was the father of H. C. Jones, many years editor of the Pontiac Sentinel) went to Pikes Peak with J. E. Morrow and other well-remembered Pontiacers, thence to California, while Edwin C. engaged in farming a few miles east of Pontiac, in Owego Township. In 1867 he sold his farm and shortly after he crossed the plains with his family, locating in Clackamas County, Oregon. This was a most dangerous and trying trip from the time of crossing the Missouri river till reaching the justly famed valley of the Willamette. The Indians committed the most atrocious murders ahead and behind them, it was the year that Nelson Buck, another old time citizen, and his party were murdered in Nebraska, while making government surveys. It became so dangerous that the government prohibited all emigration except where emigrants organized in wagon trains of about one hundred men each. Mr. Jones was elected captain of his train and commissioned as such by the commanding officer of the department. He conducted his train through safely and to the satisfaction of all who composed, meeting with resistance at a few stream crossings.

On arriving in Oregon, he purchased land from his old friend, Rev. John Darnall, another of Livingston County's most upright and honorable pioneers, who emigrated with his own and his son, Nicholas's, family in 1865. With limited means, other than nerve and muscle, he set to work to carve a farm and home out of an Oregon forest of fir and cedar. After more than twenty years of desperate effort his labor was successful and he has left his wife and children, three sons and one daughter, in possession of a plain, honest, and beautiful home. The grand orchard hanging full of choicest fruit, the granary filled with wheat. He was a home builder rather than a money maker. Rightly measured, his life was a success. He was to a fault, if such could be, everyone who knew him was his friend and he theirs. Physically strong, of good address, quiet demeanor, strictly temperate in all things, he enjoyed life, loved his home, and its mountain scenes. By his rule of life all could live well, for he earned by intelligent labor more than his living.

During his younger days in Illinois, he gained a reputation as a great hunter. Till as late as 1860, the vicinity of Burr Oak, Oliver's Grove, Corn Grove, and Five Mile Grove, known to all old timers, could be found many a buck's horn which fell by the unerring aim of his long stalked, hickory rain rodded, greased patch loading rifle: these horns he invariably marked with three nicks made with his heavy hunting knife. In the fall and early winter many a wagon trip was made to the village of Chicago with wheat and deer hides and saddles of venison, returning with salt, ammunition and such absolute necessities.

During his life in Oregon, notwithstanding the arduous task of almost quarrying a good farm and home out of rock and forest, he methodically found time each year, after the fruit and grain harvest, to make a prospecting and hunting trip to the wild and rugged cascade range, armed with a rifle, pan, pick, and compass. He was a formidable hunter and expert prospector, finding placer gold and silver quartz in many places. While not able to find gold in paying quantities he was among the first to discover and demonstrate, to the fortune of many, that silver bearing quartz and other valuable minerals were hidden in great quantity in the western slope of the Cascades.

Thirty-five miles from his home up the mountain slope towards Mr. Jefferson he with the aid of his sons, built a commodious house at the forks of the Molala, a mountain torrent filled with trout and still another 65 miles out, in what is now known as the bald mountain mining district, to either place no vehicle could ever go. He used these cabins as sort of headquarters for prospecting excursions. They are ever free to all comers. The deer, elk, and bear killed on these expeditions were carefully canned and carried out on pack animals, bringing a good price in Portland. For miles in all directions he made mountain trails, located springs of water, quartz leads and place prospects, to which now a railroad will soon be built. The writer, in a tramp over these mountains, going up nearly an angle of 45 degrees, tired, thirsty and weary, saw a sign plainly written on a cedar slab, "40 feet down to the right you will find a good spring of water. E. C. Jones."

This good man, a pioneer who always made it easier for those who came after him, has gone to meet all there is in store for humankind, in the unexplored hereafter.

Byron Phelps
Seattle, Washington
Aug. 22, 1889

Charles Jones Comes to Livingston County in 1836

As noted above, the Charles Jones family arrived in 1836 and settled near the present day village of Forrest, Illinois.

The 1909 history book has a listing of the first settlers in each township of Livingston County. Charles Jones is listed as the first settler in Forrest Township.

> **First Settler in Each Township**
>
> During the present rapid growth and development of Livingston County, it is interesting to refer to the past and see at what a comparatively recent period the first settler located in each of the different townships and also to preserve the name of the pioneers, but very few of whom are still living. To this end we give below the name of the first settler in each township in the county and time at which he located.

1830	Belle Prairie	Valentine M. Darnall
1830	Avoca	Isaac Jourdan
1830	Rooks Creek	Frederick Rook
1831	Indian Grove	Joseph Moore
1832	Chatsworth	Franklin Oliver
1832	Reading	Jacob Moon
1832	Newtown	Emsley Pope
1833	Amity	Thomas Reynolds
1833	Owego	Daniel Rockwood
1834	Eppards Point	John Eppard
1835	Esmen	John Chews
1835	Sunbury	Andrew Sprague
1836	Forrest	Charles Jones
1837	Nevada	James Funk
1837	Pontiac	Henry Weed
1838	Long Point	Andrew McDowell
1843	Pleasant Ridge	Nathan Townsend
1845	Saunemin	David Cripliver

Livingston County Formed in 1837

Livingston County was created in 1837 with Pontiac as the county seat.

Henry C. Jones Born in 1838

Henry C. Jones, son of Henry and Emily Jones, was born on February 11, 1838, in the village of Cicero in Hamilton County, Indiana.

1840 U.S. Census

Unfortunately, this Census only lists the name of the head of the household. The names of the wife and children are not shown.

Name	**Henry Jones**
Home in 1840 (City, County, State)	Jackson, Hamilton, Indiana
Free White Persons - Males - Under 5	1
Free White Persons - Males - 15 thru 19	1
Free White Persons - Males - 20 thru 29	1
Free White Persons - Males - 30 thru 39	1
Free White Persons - Females - Under 5	1
Free White Persons - Females - 5 thru 9	3
Free White Persons - Females - 20 thru 29	1
Persons Employed in Manufacture and Trade	3
No. White Persons over 20 Who Cannot Read and Write	1
Free White Persons - Under 20	6
Free White Persons - 20 thru 49	3
Total Free White Persons	9
Total All Persons - Free White, Free Colored, Slaves	9

First Marriage in Pleasant Ridge Township in 1841

According to the 1878 history book, the first marriage in Pleasant Ridge Township occurred in 1841.

> The first marriage was a daughter of Charles Brooks and St. Clair Jones, son of Charles Jones, who then lived in Forrest Township, and occurred in 1841. His people opposed the match rather strongly, but that ardent
>
> > "Young love laughs at bolts and bars"
>
> seemed to care little for parental frowns, and they were married in spite of all opposition.

Wife of Pioneer Settler Charles Jones Dies in 1841

Mary E. Jones, wife of pioneer settler Charles Jones died in 1841. Her birth date is unknown. She was likely about 50 years old because her first child was born in 1810 and she was likely about 20 years of age when she had her first child.

Many years later, in 1885, her husband, pioneer settler Charles Jones died and was buried in Cooper Cemetery, southwest of Fairbury. There are no records indicating where Mary E. Jones was buried.

Henry and Emily Jones Family Arrived in Livingston County in 1845

The 1900 history published a long biography for Henry C. Jones, son of Henry and Emily Jones. In this biography, The Henry and Emily Jones family first came to Livingston County in 1845. After a brief stay in the Pontiac area, they moved to Bellevue, Iowa.

While the family was in Iowa, son John W. Jones was born. According to the biography, the Henry and Emily Jones family moved back to the Pontiac area in 1847.

The complete biography of Henry C. Jones from the 1900 history book is shown below.

> **HENRY C. JONES**
>
> Henry C. Jones, a well-known citizen of Pontiac, Illinois, was born in Cicero, Hamilton county, Indiana, February 11, 1838, a son of Henry Jones, who was born near Cincinnati, Ohio, where during his youth he learned the blacksmith's trade. When a young man he removed to Cicero, Indiana, and turned his attention to mercantile business. Here he married Emily De Moss, a daughter of James De Moss, a French Huguenot and a carpenter by trade, who passed his last days as a farmer in Livingston county, Illinois.

The parents of our subject came to this county in 1845, but after a short time spend here they removed to the territory of Iowa, locating at Bellevue, where our subject began his education.

In 1847 the family returned to this county, and after following farming for a short time the father, in 1849, went to California, where for several years he was engaged in mining and mercantile pursuits.

Returning to Pontiac in 1855 he again engaged in mercantile business here, and was, in 1857 elected county judge.

In 1859, resigning his office of county judge here, he returned to the Pacific slope in company with our subject and fifteen young men. He engaged in mercantile business in Shasta, California, and became one of the most prominent and prosperous men of that place. He was elected a member of the board of supervisors, and was also alcalde (or mayor) of Shasta. In connection with his other business he was quite extensively engaged in gold mining. He did much to build up the town and was recognized as one of its most influential and prominent citizens.

After the Civil war he supported the Republican party and took a leading part in public affairs. He died in Shasta in 1893, and the mother of our subject died in the same place in 1868 [error, she died 1871], leaving five children, of whom Henry C. was third in order of birth.

During his boyhood our subject attended the public schools of Pontiac, and when his education was completed clerked in his father's store until going to California in 1859. They made the trip overland with horseless vehicles (ox teams) and were six months upon the way. They passed through St. Joseph, Missouri, went up the Platte when the Indians in that region were quite hostile, and passed through what is now Ogden, Utah, and through Nevada. Arriving at Shasta, California, which was a good mining town, father and son opened a store and as merchants soon built up a good trade. For some years they were interested in quartz mining.

Our subject continued in business with his father until 1864, when he enlisted in the volunteer service and was elected lieutenant of his company, but when they were put in barracks and the regulars sent to the front, he resigned. That he might see some active service he went, via Panama, to New York with the intention of enlisting there, but the war ended before he found the opportunity.

Returning to Livingston county, Illinois, Mr. Jones entered the newspaper field, and with Mr. Renoe established the Free Press at Pontiac. Later he bought the Sentinel, the oldest newspaper in the county, from James Stout, and, consolidating the two, published a paper known as the Sentinel and

Press. Mr. Renoe was a Democrat, while he was a Republican, but Mr. Renoe later withdrew, leaving Mr. Jones as sole editor and proprietor, and the paper resumed its old name as Sentinel. He continued the publication of the Sentinel for nine years, during which time he built up a good circulation and made it the leading Republican paper in the county.

Selling out in 1875, he went to Texas, and engaged in the auxiliary newspaper business in Dallas, getting out patent insides. In this enterprise he was remarkably successful, having a list of two hundred and sixty-two local papers to supply. He also published the Planter and Farmer, and in that undertaking was also successful, but on account of the ill health of his wife, he disposed of his interests in Texas and removed to Santa Cruz, California, where he owns a valuable prune ranch.

In 1892 Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac and acquired a three-fifths interest in the electric light plant, having helped to develop the enterprise. This company was incorporated as the Pontiac Light, Heat & Power Company, and has grown to large proportions. Mr. Jones served as its president for seven years, though he recently sold his interest in the same.

He has been a taxpayer in Pontiac for over thirty years and is recognized as one of her most progressive citizens, giving his support to those objects which he believes will prove of public benefit. Socially he is a member of the Pontiac Lodge, No. 294, F.& A.M.

On the 25th of September, 1873, Mr. Jones was united in marriage with Miss Mary A. Bancroft, a native of New York, and a daughter of Luther Bancroft, of Pontiac. They have one daughter, Nellie A., who with her mother is a member of the Methodist Episcopal church of Pontiac.

Henry Jones Built the First Bridge Over the Vermilion in Pontiac in 1847

According to the 1878 history book, Henry Jones was involved with building the first bridge over the Vermilion River in 1847.

> In September, 1847, the County Court contracted with Henry Jones, J. H. DeMoss, and Philip Rollings to build the bridge over the river at Pontiac for $450.

This price would be equivalent to $14,519 in today's dollars.

J. H. DeMoss was likely the father-in-law of Henry Jones.

CHAPTER 5

The 1848 to 1859 Jones Family Era

Henry Jones Elected County Commissioner in 1848

The 1878 history book reported the following.

> At the regular election in August(1848), the vote for Governor was: For A. C. French, 135. For Congress, John Wentworth, 108, John Y. Scammon, 62. For Senator, Wm. Reddick, 131. Murrell Breckenridge was elected Sheriff; Henry Jones, County Commissioner, and John Blue, Coroner.

Pioneer Settler Charles Jones Bought 80 Acres in Present-Day Forrest, Illinois

Although many pioneer settlers arrived in Livingston County in the 1830s, they could not legally purchase their land until many years after they arrived. According to the Department of the Interior website, Charles Jones purchased 80 acres on May 10, 1848 situated at 026N Township and 007 Range in Section 4.

This farm was located where the present-day village of Forrest is located.

1848 California Gold Rush

Wikipedia has the following description of the California Gold Rush.

> The California Gold Rush (1848-1855) was a gold rush that began on January 24, 1848, when gold was found by James W. Marshall at Sutter's Mill in Coloma, California.
>
> The news of gold brought approximately 300,000 people to California from the rest of the United States and abroad. The sudden influx of gold into the money supply reinvigorated the American economy; the sudden population increase allowed California to go rapidly to statehood in the Compromise of 1850. The Gold Rush had severe effects on Native Californians and accelerated the Native American population's decline from disease, starvation and the California genocide.
>
> The effects of the Gold Rush were substantial. Whole indigenous societies were attacked and pushed off their lands by the gold-seekers, called "forty-niners" (referring to 1849, the peak year for Gold Rush immigration).
>
> Outside of California, the first to arrive were from Oregon, the Sandwich Islands (Hawaii) and Latin America in late 1848. Of the approximately

300,000 people who came to California during the Gold Rush, about half arrived by sea and half came overland on the California Trail and the Gila River trail; forty-niners often faced substantial hardships on the trip.

While most of the newly arrived were Americans, the gold rush attracted thousands from Latin America, Europe, Australia and China.

Agriculture and ranching expanded throughout the state to meet the needs of the settlers. San Francisco grew from a small settlement of about 200 residents in 1846 to a boomtown of about 36,000 by 1852.

Roads, churches, schools and other towns were built throughout California. In 1849 a state constitution was written. The new constitution was adopted by referendum vote; the future state's interim first governor and legislature were chosen. In September 1850, California became a state.

At the beginning of the Gold Rush, there was no law regarding property rights in the goldfields and a system of "staking claims" was developed. Prospectors retrieved the gold from streams and riverbeds using simple techniques, such as panning. Although mining caused environmental harm, more sophisticated methods of gold recovery were developed and later adopted around the world.

New methods of transportation developed as steamships came into regular service. By 1869, railroads were built from California to the eastern United States. At its peak, technological advances reached a point where significant financing was required, increasing the proportion of gold companies to individual miners.

Gold worth tens of billions of today's US dollars was recovered, which led to great wealth for a few, though many who participated in the California Gold Rush earned little more than they had started with.

Gold Rush Impact on Central Illinois Settlers

Many early residents of Central Illinois decided that farming in the 1840s was too difficult of way to make a living and they headed to the gold fields of California to make a quick fortune.

William T. Stackpole (1827-1894) lived in Pekin, Illinois, when the Gold Rush began. He left Pekin with a party and headed to the California gold fields. He kept a hand-written diary of all the adventures he encountered to the gold fields. He also kept a diary of his return trip to Pekin including walking across Guatemala.

Stackpole's diary has been transcribed and published in the book titled ***William T. Stackpole's 1849 Journey from Illinois to the California Gold Fields***. Mr. Stackpole eventually settled in Fairbury, Illinois in 1857.

Henry Jones Bitten by the California Gold Bug

In 1849, the names and ages of the members of the Henry and Emily Jones family are shown below.

Henry Jones	37.
Emily Jones	39
Rebecca Jones	16.
Martha A. Jones	15.
Malinda J. Jones	14.
Henry C. Jones	11.
Elvina Jones	10
John W. Jones	6
James H. Jones	Newborn

Henry Jones was bitten by the Gold Bug and he convinced his wife to let him go to California to prospect for gold, leaving her to raise the seven children noted above.

Emily Jones and her seven children went to live with her parents in their household while Henry Jones was gone to California.

Gold Mining Trips Described in 1909 History Book

Henry C. Jones, son of Henry and Emily Jones, wrote a 2,600 word account of the California gold mining adventures for the 1909 history book. This account is shown below.

A GOLD SEEKER'S REMINISCENCES.

EXPERIENCE OF A PARTY OF ARGONAUTS OF 1849 STORY OF THREE EXPEDITIONS TO THE CALIFORNIA GOLD MINES —THE MINING EXPERIENCE SUCCESSFUL, BUT THE RETURNING GOLD-SEEKERS BECOME THE VICTIMS OF MEXICAN BANDITS AND MISSISSIPPI RIVER THIEVES—A THIRD EXPEDITION TURNS AWAY FROM PIKE'S PEAK TO THE PACIFIC COAST — LIST OF MEMBERS OF THESE SEVERAL EXPEDITIONS.

(By Henry C. Jones, Pontiac.)

FIRST EXPEDITION.—In the fall of 1848 and the following winter, there was great interest among the early settlers of Livingston County, as well as throughout the entire civilized world, concerning the wonderful discoveries of gold in California.

The "gold fever" became an epidemic all over the Western country, and many of the most hardy and adventurous victims were carried off by the "yellow peril." This county, although sparsely settled, contributed its quota of these overland Argonauts who "went the plains across" to the Pacific coast.

In the spring of 1849, James Blake of Avoca, and Henry Jones and G. B. Foster of Owego, started out with an ox team on the perilous journey of 2,000 miles through an almost unexplored wilderness. The Indians were hostile from the Missouri river to the Pacific Ocean, and while many of the gold seekers were killed by the savages or perished on the way from disease or thirst and starvation, the contingent from this county landed safely in the Sacramento Valley in the fall of 1849, and continued on their journey to the mines in northern California. The mines were rich, and in eighteen months the three partners—Blake, Jones and Foster—had accumulated over $25,000 in gold.

Jones and Blake had families in this county, and Foster's people lived in Pontiac, and having about as much gold as they could conveniently carry —not a very large fortune, but enough to have bought at that time an entire township of thirty-six sections of the best land in Livingston

County, worth today over $4,000, 000—they began making preparations for the return trip.

They went to San Francisco, and with several other returning miners, engaged passage on a schooner to Panama. The passengers were so poorly fed and brutally treated by the officers and crew of the schooner that they revolted and compelled the captain to run the ship into the harbor of Acapulco, Mexico. The matter was taken up by the American consul at that port, and after a settlement with the captain, the vessel was allowed to continue her journey to Panama.

The miners then bought fifteen horses, for riding and packing, bought food and camp equipage, engaged a guide and interpreter, and started over the mountains for the City of Mexico, over 200 miles distant. This was soon after the close of the war with Mexico, and there was very bitter feeling against the "gringos," as the Americans were called. The mountains through which the trail passed were infested with bandits and outlaws, and it was necessary for self protection to not only go well armed but to keep a vigilant guard over their treasure day and night. The gold belonging to the company from this county was divided into three parts, sewed up in buckskin bags, and Blake, Jones and Foster each took possession of a part to carry and protect on the journey.

On the third day out from Acapulco, the trip so far having been surprisingly delightful, the men began to get careless and less vigilant, and Foster allowed himself to lag behind. Before he was aware of his dangerous position, he was surrounded by armed bandits, overcome, disarmed and robbed of his share of the gold. The robbers made a hasty retreat back over the trail, and by the time Foster could ride forward, overtake his comrades and give the alarm, the bandits had left the trail and entered the rocky, wooded canyons where their capture was impossible. The party then concluded that the best thing to do was to make all haste possible to reach the City of Mexico, and from that time on be more vigilant than ever.

Six days after leaving Acapulco, the party arrived in the City of Mexico. There they discharged their guide and interpreter, and began making preparations to continue their journey to Vera Cruz, on the gulf of Mexico. By this time, one of the party had picked up enough of the Spanish language to make their wants known, and as the roads were better, they decided to dispense with the services of a guide and interpreter.

After a rest of two days in the capital of Mexico, they again started on their journey to Vera Cruz, over 300 miles distant. Without further adventure, they arrived at Vera Cruz in seven days. There they disposed of their horses and camp outfit, and engaged passage on a sailing vessel to

New Orleans, and being favored with fine weather they made the trip across the gulf in six days.

Arriving in New Orleans, the party went direct from the ship to the mint to deposit their gold for coinage, and to leave it there where it would be safe until they were ready to resume their journey to their homes in this county.

Their stay In New Orleans was brief but exciting. After securing passage on a boat for St. Louis and getting their baggage on board, they went to the mint to get their money. They learned that their gold had not been coined, but that the dust and nuggets had been melted down to bricks, assayed and the value ascertained.

The cashier at the mint informed the men that they could then have the coin for their gold bricks, and counted out and paid the party $17,400 in new $20 gold pieces. The three partners then counted out $1,400, divided it among the three for the necessary expenses of the remainder of their journey, placed the balance in their canvas bags supplied by the mint and started with the coin to the boat, which was to start up the river that night or the next morning. After boarding the boat, they went immediately to their state room, deposited the bags of coin in a strong trunk, and agreed that at least one of the party should be in the room with the trunk until they arrived at St. Louis.

When supper was announced, Jones and Foster went to the dining room and left Blake to guard the trunk containing the money. When the two were almost through with their meal, they were surprised to see Blake come into the dining room. Jones and Foster at once jumped up from the table and hurried to their room.

They found the door unlocked, the trunk broken open and the three bags of coin missing. The alarm was given and the officers of the boat notified that their state room had been robbed The police were put on the trail of the two robbers who had been seen leaving the room carrying heavy loads and hurrying down the gang plank.

The boat did not start until the next afternoon, and during the night and day following the robbery, every effort was made to cap matter was left with the police, who never did anything. The men were anxious to get home, did not care to lose the passage money they had paid, and concluded to stay with the boat.

The only excuse Blake could make for violating their agreement to guard the trunk was that he thought they were again in a civilized country and that there was no danger. Besides, he said, he was thirsty and hungry, and had locked the state room door, gone to the bar and from there to the

dining room. The three men arrived at their homes a little over two years after starting for California, with only a few hundred dollars each, but rich in experience.

SECOND EXPEDITION.—Jones was dissatisfied with the results of his first trip to the gold mines of California, and in the spring of 1852 organized the second expedition of gold-seekers, and left Richmond, two miles east of Pontiac, with an ox team for the gold fields of the Pacific coast to make their fortunes.

This second party consisted of Henry Jones, John Popejoy, Theodore Popejoy and Edwin Jones. Henry Jones having made the trip across the plains in 1849 and having experience with Indians on the way and afterwards in California, was made the leader of the party.

There had been such a large emigration across the plains In 1849, '50 and '51, that the road had become plain and easy to follow and the Indians made less trouble. This party met with but few adventures and arrived at the mines the fall following. They at once located mines and were quite successful as gold miners.

After two and a half years spent in the gold mines, Henry Jones and Edwin Jones returned via Panama and New York to Pontiac in 1855, and built the first brick building ever erected In Pontiac and engaged in general merchandising.

John and Theodore Popejoy never returned to this county, but remained in the mines on the Pacific coast.

THIRD EXPEDITION.—In 1858-59 another gold craze spread over the entire country, and while the fever was not as wide-spread nor the excitement as intense as that created by the discovery of gold in California ten years before, yet throughout the Western states and territories many thousands of fortune hunters prepared to visit the newly discovered gold fields. The discovery was made near Pike's Peak, in Western Kansas, (now Colorado,) and fabulous stories about the great quantities of the yellow metal that could be shoveled up in the new mines were printed in the newspapers throughout the land.

Of course the young men of Livingston County, as well as many of the older ones, became afflicted with the contagion, and began to look about for ways and means to make the trip to the Pike's Peak gold mines.

Judge Jones of Pontiac, being an experienced gold miner, and having become familiar with the route across the plains, was persuaded to resign the office of County Judge and pilot a third expedition from this county in

the search for gold. This party, which left Pontiac on the 10th day of April, 1859, with two ox teams, was made up of the following named persons: Judge Henry Jones, Robert Aerl, Jesse Green, C. L. Paige, J. E. Morrow, Isaac Aerl, S. L. Frost, H. C. Jones, Charles Hughes, William Earp, Elias Thompson, Lyman Smith, Eli Moriage, Joe Millham, D. Conklin and Daniel McArthur.

Later the party was joined by John Johnson, Oliver Johnson and William Cherry of Rooks Creek, with their ox team. The party from Pontiac was governed by a set of rules, one of which was that every man should walk the entire distance, if he was able to walk, and carry his gun, if he had one.

It was known to be a dangerous practice to climb in and out of a wagon with a loaded gun. Another rule was that the men should not shoot at or molest stock or poultry while passing through the settlements, nor fire at an Indian without orders from the Judge. This rule was necessary because reckless shooting had involved previous expeditions in serious trouble. Each one had his work allotted to him, and the Judge saw that all performed their respective duties.

The expedition crossed the Mississippi river at Fort Madison, Iowa, and the Missouri at St. Joseph, Mo. There were no railroads west of St. Joseph and Kansas City at that time, and after leaving the Missouri river there were but few settlements.

The broad prairies of Kansas and Nebraska were still the hunting grounds of the "untutored savage." Deer, antelope and countless thousands of buffalo still roamed the verdant plains. In May, the roads having become more settled, the party made rapid progress, considering the motive power, and by the exercise of caution and vigilance met with no trouble from marauding bands of Indians, as many other parties did.

After passing Fort Kearney, Nebraska, many gold seekers were met returning from Pike's Peak, declaring that the stories about the great gold discoveries in Western Kansas were unfounded; that there was no gold there, etc., etc.

So many of these disappointed people were met, a great many of whom had never reached the mines, all telling the same doleful story, that some of the Livingston County delegation began to feel discouraged, but they continued on their journey. The party reached the crossing of the South Platte, where the Pike's Peak road branched off from the old California road, and there they went into camp.

For three days they met and talked with disappointed gold seekers, returning from the mines, and then discussed among themselves as to what

course they should take—go on to Pike's Peak or cross the river and continue the journey on to California, where there was no doubt about the gold. It was agreed finally to take a vote on the question, with the result that all voted to go on to the Pacific Coast.

The next day the party replenished their stock of provisions by purchasing supplies from returning gold hunters, and in the evening crossed the Platte river and pulled out for a long, tedious and dangerous trip across the mountains and plains to California. Many adventures and dangers were met with by the expedition that would be tedious and out of place to narrate here, and will be omitted.

In October, just six months after starting from Pontiac, the party arrived at the mines in Northern California. In 1861 Robert Aerl, Isaac Aerl and C. L. Paige returned, via Panama and New York, to Pontiac. In 1862, J. E. Morrow and Jesse Green returned and in 1863, H. C. Jones returned, via Nicaragua, on a visit, and later returned to stay, all having been reasonably successful in the mines.

Judge Jones and the other members of the expedition remained in California. Soon after his return from California, C. L. Paige enlisted in the 20th Illinois Volunteers, and was killed in battle at Atlanta, Ga. Isaac Aerl enlisted and served over three years, and was through the siege of Vicksburg.

On his return to Pontiac. J. E. Morrow enlisted and marched with Sherman to the Atlantic Ocean, having previously walked from Pontiac to the Pacific. After the war was over, Mr. Morrow was elected circuit clerk for Livingston County, and after the expiration of his term of office he organized the National Bank of Pontiac, and was its president until his death.

Isaac Aerl, Jesse Green and H. C. Jones are still (1908) respected citizens of Pontiac. It may not be known, even among his most intimate friends, that Isaac Aerl is a veteran of two wars. In I860 a bitter war raged between the gamblers, saloon keepers and their following, of Shasta, Cal, on one side, and the gold miners on the other, over some rich gold mines. Mr. Aerl, of course, was with the miners, and taking his trusty rifle in one hand and his life in the other, he went into the rifle pits, built on what is still known as Bunker Hill, and there assisted in the defeat of the enemy, over 100 strong, and well armed, when they made an attack on the miners, and helped drive them back to the city.

It is generally believed that an ox team cannot be successfully managed unless the driver is profuse in the use of profanity, but Jesse Green drove

an ox team from Livingston County to California without using a profane word that anybody ever heard.

Henry and Emily Jones Living Separately in 1850 U.S. Census

In this Census, Henry Jones lived in Shasta, California. He was 38 years of age and gave his occupation as a trader. Henry Jones lived with James Blakes, age 48, George Foster, age 22, and Walter Smith, age 23.

Emily Jones and her seven children were living on the North Side of the Vermilion River with her parents, James DeMoss, age 66, and Nancy DeMoss, age 64. Emily and her children living with her parents are shown below.

Emily Jones	40
Rebecca Jones	17.
Martha A. Jones	16.
Malinda J. Jones	15.
Henry C. Jones	12.
Elvina Jones	10.
John W. Jones	7.
James H. Jones	0.

Henry Jones Involved with Ghost Town of Richmond, Illinois

The long story of the gold mining adventures noted above stated that Henry Jones left for California in the Spring of 1849. The gold mining story also states he left on his second expedition in the Spring of 1852.

According to the 1878 history book, Henry Jones was involved with the creation of Richmond, Illinois. This event must have occurred after Henry Jones returned to Pontiac after his first gold mining expedition.

THE VILLAGE OF RICHMOND

The reader will not be troubled to wade through statistics as to this item as the only thing to record is its history, and that of an ancient nature. Still, it is history, and not fiction, that we write; for, though the reader may never have heard of it, the town of Richmond did exist. Not only so, but it was a rival of Pontiac, and but for a very small circumstance would doubtless have been by today the most flourishing city in the county. Richmond was located two miles east of Pontiac. It was regularly laid out and platted by Franklin Oliver, County Surveyor, for Henry Jones and Henry Loveless, June 23, 1851.

> Rumors of a railroad through this section were afloat; and that being a nice location for a town, and that point in the river being a good one for a railroad crossing, it was not doubted by its friends that this would be the favored point.
>
> Stores and shops and a school house soon sprang into existence; lots were disposed of for good prices; dwellings were built, and everything indicated a rising town. But alas for human hopes and desires. The road (Railroad) lacked just two miles of passing through the historic village, and its bright anticipations burst like a bubble and vanished almost as quickly. Some of the buildings were moved to Pontiac, some did service afterward as stables and granaries, and the only monument that now exists of the once sprightly little village is an open space just south of Philip Rollings' house.

Daughter of Henry and Emily Jones Married in 1851

Martha A. Jones (1834-1912) married George Ball Foster (1824-1888) on December 21, 1851. The marriage occurred in the village of Richmond in Livingston County. George B. Foster was 27 and Martha Jones was 17 years of age when they married. George and Emily Foster had ten children.

It is assumed that the G. B. Foster that accompanied Henry Foster on their first expedition to California is the same George Ball Foster that married Martha A. Jones, the daughter of Henry Jones.

The 1888 history book has a biography for George Ball Foster and it is shown below.

> George Foster, one of the oldest living pioneers of Livingston County, was born in Tioga County, N. Y., Aug. 17, 1825, the son of John and Susan (Shephard) Foster, the former a native of Vermont, and the latter, who it is known was of New England birth, was probably reared not far from the birthplace of her husband.
>
> The Foster family is of English ancestry, and was first represented in this country in the Colonial days. The mother of our subject was of Scotch descent, and her great-grandfather settled in New England probably before the commencement of the Revolutionary War. The Fosters were largely represented in New England, and the father of our subject was one of a numerous family whose father had been married several times. The children now living are: Edward, of Denver, Col.; Robert, of Kansas ; James, of Kansas City, Mo. ; Frank, Charles, and George B. of our sketch.
>
> In 1837 John Foster, with sixteen others of the same patronymic, including the family of the maternal grandfather, started West, making their way to Cleveland. Ohio, by lake and rail, then engaged teams and proceeded

overland, locating first at Dayton, Ohio, on account of the cold weather, which interfered with their comfort while camping out at night. They remained there three months, when they continued their journey, finally settling in Pontiac. Here our subject was reared to manhood and trained especially to habits of industry and economy while receiving a limited education in the pioneer school. He took kindly to labor, and at an early age became initiated into the secrets of successful farming, which he naturally chose as his future vocation. He was married, Dec. 21, 1852, after reaching his twenty-seventh year, to Miss Martha Jones, who was born in Indiana, Feb. 25, 1834. Mrs. F. was the daughter of Henry and Emily (De Moss) Jones, natives of Kentucky, who emigrated to Illinois about 1846, and settled in Owego Township.

They afterward removed to California, where the mother died about 1863, and where Mr. Jones is still living. Mr. and Mrs. Foster became the parents of six children, of whom the record is as follows: Agnes, the first born, died when one year old ; Henry obtained a fine education and is now Principal of the Pontiac High School, and numbered among the efficient popular educators of the county; Emily is the wife of William Decker, a prosperous merchant of Owego Township; Susan married Charles Grandy, who is farming in Pontiac Township, where Nathan also pursues the same calling; Clarence is a resident of Owego Township.

In 1852 Mr. Foster purchased the land comprising his present farm, which was then an uncultivated tract of prairie, distant from markets and even from the traveled highway. Scarcely a furrow had been turned, while deer and other wild game were plentiful in that vicinity. Mr. Foster, being quite a marksman, kept his family supplied with the finest of wild meats, and if at times they lacked flour they were seldom without the important article of meat. He commenced farming with an ox-team and a few rude implements which would be regarded with ridicule at the present day. He set out, however, with the resolution of making the best of circumstances, gaining a little each year until he had turned the sod upon the greater part of his possessions and brought the soil to a good state of cultivation. It is now considered one of the finest farms of its size in Owego Township, and although consisting of but eighty acres is more valuable than many occupying a larger area.

Mr. Foster, while having an abundance of labor on hand in connection with his own interests, has deported himself unselfishly and given whatever of his time and attention that was needful in subserving the welfare of his community. He has been School Director for many years, and sought by his influence, and more substantial methods when necessary, to encourage those enterprises tending to the welfare of the people. He uniformly votes the Democratic ticket, and with his estimable lady is numbered among the valued residents of Livingston County, who

> have assisted in the development of its resources, rejoiced in its prosperity, and contributed their quota toward its moral welfare.

Henry Jones Goes Back to California for Second Expedition Spring of 1852

The gold mining article above recounts that Henry Jones went to California for the second time in the Spring of 1852. Henry Jones returned to Pontiac in 1855 with Edwin Jones. Mr. Edwin Jones was a son of pioneer settler Charles Jones.

The biography of Henry C. Jones in the 1900 history book also recounted that Henry Jones returned to Pontiac in 1855. After he returned to Pontiac, he engaged in the mercantile business.

Henry Jones Elected to Livingston County Judge in 1857

The November 18, 1857, Pantagraph published the results of the November election in 1857.

> Livingston. ─ The Sentinel gives the elected officers, with their majorities, as follows; Henry Jones, Judge, Dem., 74; Morgan, Assessor, Dem., 44; Angle, Associate, Rep., 4; Buck, Surveyor, Dem., 49; Hagerty, School Commissioner, Dem., 15; Wolverton, Treasurer, Rep., 41; Saul, Clerk, Dem., 98.

Henry Jones was not a lawyer, but he was elected to be a Livingston County Judge.

The biography of Henry C. Jones in the 1900 history book also recounted that Henry Jones was elected as a Livingston County Judge in 1857.

Henry Jones Builds First Brick Structure in Livingston County

The account of the gold mining adventures from the 1909 history book reported that Henry Jones built the first brick structure in Livingston County. The segment of the 1909 story is recounted below.

> After two and a half years spent in the gold mines, Henry Jones and Edwin Jones returned via Panama and New York to Pontiac in 1855, and built the first brick building ever erected in Pontiac and engaged in general merchandising.

The 1909 gold mining report stated that Henry Jones returned to Pontiac from the second expedition in 1855 and left for the third expedition in April of 1859. This time-line means this first brick building in Livingston County had to have been erected between 1855 and April of 1859.

The 1878 history book also reported on the first brick structure in Livingston County as recounted below.

> The first Court House was erected in 1839-40, by Henry Weed, Lucius Young and Seth W. Young. It was accepted from them, and a bond of $3,000 surrendered, in which they had stipulated to erect the house at their own expense, provided the county seat was located on the land selected by them.
>
> The second Court House was erected under the county judgeship of Billings P. Babcock, and was as good a building as could he erected at that time for the money expended. Judge Babcock gave the same particular care to every item of its material and construction that he displays in his own financial affairs.
>
> The previous year, Judge Henry Jones erected, at Pontiac, the first brick building ever erected in the county. It is the one that has recently been remodeled, and is now occupied as a residence by Joseph P. Turner. The brick of which it was composed were purchased in Bloomington and hauled to Pontiac: and, in stipulating with the contractors, Judge Babcock required the brick to be of as good quality as the material used in the building of this house.
>
> This opened up a new industry, and the first bricks were made during the same year. The building was two stories high having offices for the Circuit Clerk, County Clerk, Sheriff and Treasurer on the first floor, and the court room and jury room on the second floor. In 1871, a fire-proof vault, in an added wing, was completed.
>
> On the 4th day of July, 1874, this building was destroyed by fire, together with Union Block and the Phoenix Hotel.
>
> The present Court House was erected the following year, and was completed in the month of December, and dedicated by the first Old Settlers' meeting. This structure is one of the finest in the State. J. C. Cochrane, of Chicago, was the architect, and the contract for building was awarded to Colvin, Clark &, Co., of Ottawa.

Unfortunately, the 1878 history book did not report what year the second courthouse was completed. The Henry Jones brick structure was built the year before the second courthouse was completed.

Natzke and Weber Pamphlet

Arnold Natzke and Stanley Weber prepared a history of the Livingston County courthouses for the October 13, 2002 re-dedication of the third Livingston County Courthouse built in 1875. An excerpt from this history is shown below.

> 1837 February 27. Livingston County was established as the 66th of what would become 102 Illinois counties.
>
> 1841 July 23. The first courthouse, a 30 x 22 two story-frame building was completed at a cost of $800.
>
> 1856 The second courthouse, a two-story brick structure, was completed at a cost of $14,000.

So if the Natzke and Weber 2002 timeline is correct, the second courthouse was completed in 1856. If Henry Jones' first brick structure in Livingston County was built one year prior, that would establish the build date as 1855. This date of 1855 fits in the time that Henry Jones was back in Pontiac between 1855 and 1859.

Robert Schlosser's 1985 Research into When the Oldest Brick Structure was Built

In the October 24, 1985 issue of the ***Update*** newsletter, Robert Schlosser was also disappointed the 1878 history book did not identify what year the courthouse was built which in turns dates the construction of the oldest brick structure at 315 W. Howard St. In his newsletter, the "troublesome paragraph" refers to the 1878 history book paragraph which does not give the date the courthouse was built.

> **A Troublesome Paragraph:** The second paragraph of the above quote is troublesome in that a precise date or year is not given. It does not clear the matter very much to know that according to a deed recorded in Deed Book F, on page 296, Henry Jones purchased the property mentioned in the above quote on the first day of October in 1855, and that the brick residence still stands at 315 West Howard Street.
>
> For the second courthouse to be built during the judgeship of Babcock, it would have been built before his resignation became effective, and before Judge Lee, his successor, took office on 21 November 1856. This change in judgeship is not mentioned on page 242 in the 1878 History.

Matters are cleared up a bit when reference is made to page 72 in the ***1940 WPA INVENTORY*** book. Here it is stated that the decision to construct a new courthouse was made on December 4, 1855. The exact site for the new structure was determined on April 24, 1856, and the new building was accepted by the county on December 6, 1856.

The second paragraph appears somewhat more logical if the Henry Jones home was well along in construction by the end of year 1855. Even though the home would not have been entirely finished, the brick and other material for the new home could have been examined by Judge Babcock and building contractors many weeks before the contract for the courthouse was let.

1989 Pantagraph Article About Oldest Brick Structure Being Torn Down

When this oldest brick structure in Livingston County was torn down in 1989, the Pantagraph published a story about this structure.

The Pantagraph
January 15, 1989

Livingston County's oldest brick structure faces uncertain future

By: James Keeran

PONTIAC — When tomorrow bumps into yesterday, yesterday usually loses. It has always been that way. The new replaces the old. And that is probably what will happen to the first brick structure built in Livingston County because the only people who really want it, cannot really afford it.

The building is at 315 W. Howard St., immediately east of Bill Ramseyer's Standard service station. Ramseyer owns it, but he does not want it. He would sell it, he said, "If somebody would come and offer me some money for it." Ramseyer is also reticent to talk about the building. "No matter what I do," he said, "there's going to be some people mad at me." But he did say "I would hope there's going to be a service station there."

Jim and Carla Brewer would like to buy the building. They said Ramseyer told them he plans to demolish the building and expand his service station on the property. The Brewers want to save the building, move it, renovate it and open a for-profit business in it to be known as the Livingston County Genealogical Society.

John Perring, president of the Livingston County Historical Society, and Robert A. Schlosser, immediate past president of the society, are aware of what is likely to happen to the building, and are only mildly concerned.

"Just call us concerned citizens," said Mrs. Brewer, who, with her husband, did a little professional genealogy work last year and this year has dreams of turning it into a full-time occupation. But the rub, of course, is money.

The Brewers say it would cost nearly $120,000 to save the building. They have a firm estimate from a Chicago area moving company of $77,000 to move the structure. Ramseyer, they said, told them he would sell it to them for $10,000. A suitable lot would cost $9,000. A new foundation would cost $15,000, and it would cost another $5,000 to get utilities and plumbing reconnected. Then they could begin planning the renovation.

It was their hope that a state or federal agency would step in and pick up the cost of saving the oldest brick building in the county, Brewer said. But, after several telephone calls, "we were very disillusioned." And, while they haven't given up hope, they believe private financing is the only chance to save the building; and they don't think they can get it.

"We'll look for a little while longer," Brewer said, "and if we don't find anything, we'll have to give up. We'll have a little piece of history that's gone," he said. "We feel that it's a shame that the oldest residence in Pontiac is to be torn down and the second one is still there." Only part of that last statement is accurate.

The building in question is the oldest brick structure in the entire county, not just Pontiac, but it was not built as a residence. When it was built it in 1858 "the west brick portion was originally erected as a retail store," according to Robert Schlosser's monograph, "***More Than One Dozen Noteworthy Historical Items***," published in 1987 when he was still president of the historical society.

His research shows that the building was built of bricks hauled to Pontiac from Bloomington, that Henry Jones and Edwin C. Jones (he could not find out if they were related) operated a store of some kind in the new brick structure, that Henry bought Edwin out in 1857, that he borrowed money for the buyout, that he borrowed money to pay off that loan, that he and a son left for California in 1859, and that second loan was never paid.

The loan was foreclosed and John L. Turner bought the building the following year. There may have been a fire in the building in the late

1860s, and through the years various additions and renovations have detracted from its historical significance, Schlosser said, and he does not know what remains that is original in the structure.

"The integrity of the building has been violated," Schlosser said. In other words: "It's a pile of brick." The second oldest structure that Brewer referred to is in fact that, but it was built in 1857 first as a residence. So it is the second oldest brick building in the county, but the oldest brick residence.

Located at 314 E. Madison St. in Pontiac, it is owned and maintained by the historical society. And, while the first brick building was built by a fellow named Jones and the second was built by John Dehner, it is the second that is known as "The Jones House" because, while the Jones who built the first may have skipped town on a loan, his son came back and bought the Dehner house.

That Jones, Henry C., lived there for 21 years before he died, and his widow stayed on another 21 years. It came on the market in 1976 and two Pontiac men bought it with the historical society in mind, according to Schlosser's monograph.

The Society, helped by a trust fund, bought it in 1977 and has been restoring it since. Current society president John Perring said Ramseyer asked about the society's interest in the building next to his service station before he bought it about a year and a half ago.

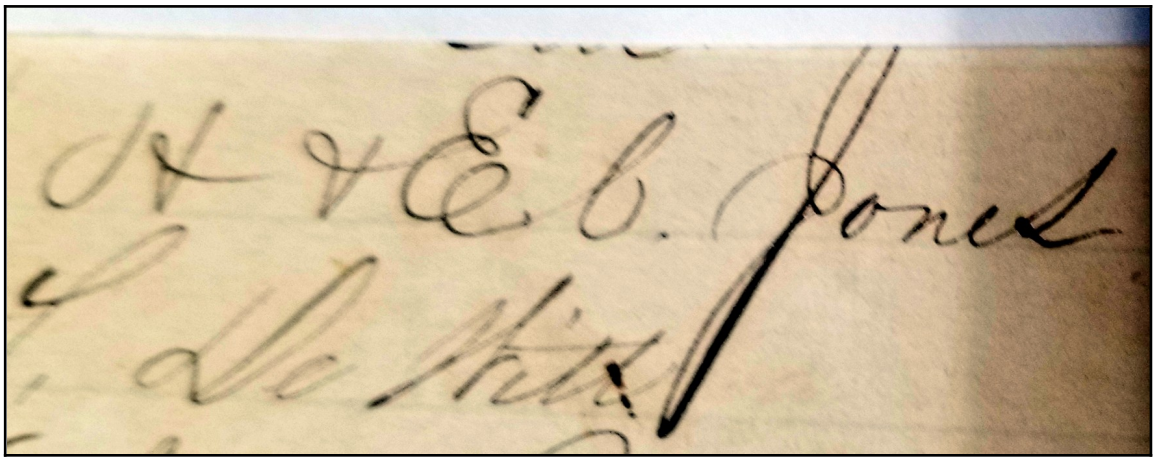
The society considered it, Perring said, and decided it would be too expensive. “We who believe in restoration sometimes have to admit that a house may be beyond practical means of bringing it back," he said. “Besides, the building is not in very good shape." The Brewers admit their hopes are probably futile, and, as a last resort, say they would be partially satisfied if somebody would at least install a plaque near the site recognizing it for his historical significance to the county.

Property Tax Records for Block 29 Lot 6 Which is Now 315 W. Howard St.

The old property tax records in the basement of the Historic Courthouse in Pontiac were reviewed by the author on October 11, 2023. This information is shown in spreadsheet form below.

Year	Block No.	Lot No.	Address	Common Name	Taxpayer	Value	Total Tax
1854	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	Hans Fellows + Ruth?	$200.00	$1.79
1855	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	Kevin Fellom + Henry Weed	$250.00	$3.80
1856	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	H. + E.B. Jones	$6.00	$0.39
1857	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	H. + E.C. Jones	$600.00	$10.02
1858	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	Henry Jones	$600.00	$8.21
1859	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	Henry Jones	$500.00	$8.98
1860	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	Henry Jones	$500.00	$18.50
1861	29	6	315 W. Howard	Oldest Brick Structure	J. P. James?	$600.00	$9.48

The entry for the taxpayer in 1856 is shown below.



This name appears to be H & E. b. Jones. The taxpayer names for the next year, 1857, is clearly H. and E.C. Jones.

It is likely the 1856 entry is an error, and it should have been H. & E.C. Jones. It is assumed these initials stand for Henry Jones and Edwin Charles Jones.

This data indicates these two gentlemen purchased the land together in 1856. The property value dramatically increased to $600 in 1857, indicating a building was constructed on this property. This data indicates the building was constructed in the 1856-1857 era.

In 1858, Henry Jones was the sole owner. He and Edwin Charles Jones no longer owned the property jointly. Henry Jones no longer owned the property in 1860 because a different person paid the 1861 property taxes.

What Year Did Henry Jones and Edwin C. Jones Build the First Brick Structure in Livingston County?

Using the information in the 1878 history book and the 2002 Natzke and Weber timeline, one would conclude the oldest brick structure in Livingston County was built in 1855.

Using the old property tax data, one would conclude the oldest brick structure was built in the 1856-1857 era.

Using the information in the 1989 Pantagraph story, one would conclude the structure was built in 1858.

Using all the information available at this time, it is most likely this structure was built between 1855 and 1857.

Henry C. Jones Worked in His Father's Pontiac Store until 1859

The biography of Henry C. Jones in the 1900 history book recounts that Henry C. Jones worked in his father's Pontiac mercantile store until they both left for California in 1859.

Judge Jones Leaves Pontiac for Good in 1859

According to the gold story published in the 1909 history book, Judge Henry Jones resigned as a Livingston County Judge and went on his third expedition to California in April of 1859.

On this third trip, Henry C. Jones, son of Judge Henry Jones, went with his father on this trip.

Judge Henry Jones was 47 and his son Henry C. Jones was 21 years of age when they left Pontiac for California. Emily Jones was 49 years of age when her husband and son left Pontiac for California.

Judge Jones Resigns as Livingston County Judge in 1859

Robert Arnold Schlosser of the Livingston County Historical Society, did some research about the Jones House. He published some of his research results in the September 27, 1984 issue of the ***Update*** newsletter.

> Early in 1859, Papa Jones may have run out of money and it seems that he may have gone, sans spouse and family, to parts unknown; unknown at at least to this study.
>
> A special election was held on May 6, 1859, to select a judge to fill the vacancy created by the departure of Jones.
>
> In February of 1860, the brick home was sold at public auction to pay off the mortgage (the structure at 315 W. Howard St.). In April of 1860, spouse Emily signed a quit claim deed to the property and received two hundred and twenty-five dollars.

CHAPTER 6

The 1860 to 1893 Jones Family Era

1860 Census

Neither Judge Henry Jones or son Henry C. Jones could be found in the 1860 Census. They were likely living in Shasta, California in 1860.

Emily Jones lived with her daughter Martha Foster and her husband George B. Foster in Owego Township in Livingston County.

Judge Henry Jones Activities in Shasta after 1859

The biography of Henry C. Jones recounted that Judge Henry Jones became a prominent citizen in Shasta, California.

> In 1859, resigning his office of county judge here, he returned to the Pacific slope in company with our subject and fifteen young men. He engaged in mercantile business in Shasta, California, and became one of the most prominent and prosperous men of that place. He was elected a member of the board of supervisors, and was also alcalde (or mayor) of Shasta. In connection with his other business he was quite extensively engaged in gold mining. He did much to build up the town and was recognized as one of its most influential and prominent citizens.

Henry C. Jones Returns to Pontiac from California in 1863

According to the gold mining story in the 1909 history book, Henry C. Jones returned to Pontiac around 1863. His father, Judge Henry Jones, decided to live the rest of his life in Shasta, California.

> In October, just six months after starting from Pontiac, the party arrived at the mines in Northern California. In 1861 Robert Aerl, Isaac Aerl and C. L. Paige returned, via Panama and New York, to Pontiac. In 1862, J. E. Morrow and Jesse Green returned and in 1863, H. C. Jones returned, via Nicaragua, on a visit, and later returned to stay, all having been reasonably successful in the mines.

While Henry C. Jones was in California with his father, Judge Henry Jones, he and his father opened a store in Shasta. This is recounted in the biography of Henry C. Jones in the 1909 history book.

> Arriving at Shasta, California, which was a good mining town, father and son opened a store and as merchants soon built up a good trade. For some years they were interested in quartz mining.
>
> Our subject continued in business with his father until 1864, when he enlisted in the volunteer service and was elected lieutenant of his company, but when they were put in barracks and the regulars sent to the front, he resigned.

Did Henry C. Jones Serve in the Civil War?

According to the biography of Henry C. Jones in the 1900 history book, he briefly enlisted in Army before resigning.

> Our subject continued in business with his father until 1864, when he enlisted in the volunteer service and was elected lieutenant of his company, but when they were put in barracks and the regulars sent to the front, he resigned.

A record in Ancestry.com indicates that a Henry C. Jones enlisted in California on April 9, 1864. The record also recounts that his rank was Junior 2nd Lieutenant.

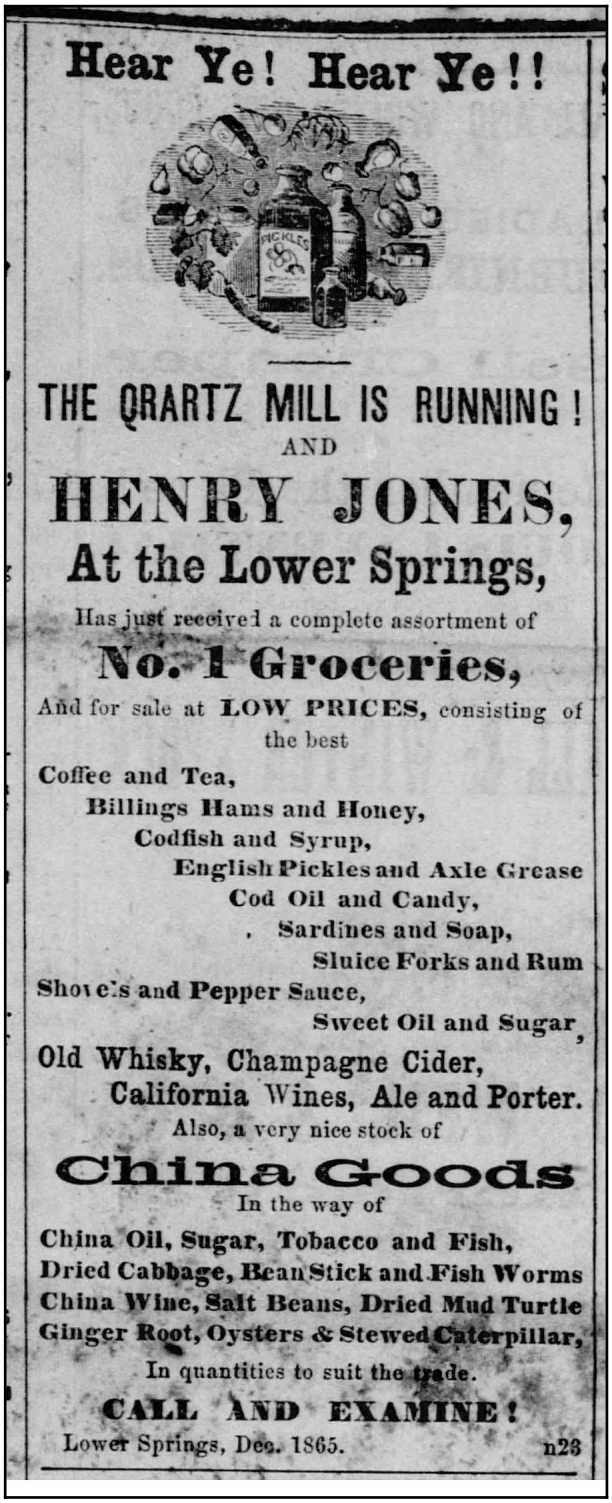
If this record is for the same Henry C. Jones, one would conclude that he never really saw any action in the Civil War because he resigned.

Judge Henry Jones Ran a Store in Shasta, California in 1865

Historians often report that relatively few men "struck it rich" in the gold fields of California. Most men gave up on gold mining and went back home, or took up another occupation in California.

A few men set up businesses which sold supplies to the flood of gold miners and they became wealthy. This fact caused the old saying that "more money was made selling picks and shovels to the gold miners than the gold miners themselves made."

Judge Henry Jones was one of the men who set up a business selling supplies to the gold miners and the new settlers in California. A copy of an advertisement from the December 30, 1865, Shasta Courier newspaper is shown below.



Hear Ye! Hear Ye!!

THE QRARTZ MILL IS RUNNING!

AND

HENRY JONES,

At the Lower Springs,

Has just received a complete assortment of

No. 1 Groceries,

And for sale at LOW PRICES, consisting of the best

Coffee and Tea,
Billings Hams and Honey,
Codfish and Syrup,
English Pickles and Axle Grease
Cod Oil and Candy,
Sardines and Soap,
Sluice Forks and Rum
Shovels and Pepper Sauce,
Sweet Oil and Sugar,
Old Whisky, Champagne Cider,
California Wines, Ale and Porter.

Also, a very nice stock of

China Goods

In the way of

China Oil, Sugar, Tobacco and Fish,
Dried Cabbage, Bean Stick and Fish Worms
China Wine, Salt Beans, Dried Mud Turtle
Ginger Root, Oysters & Stewed Caterpillar,

In quantities to suit the trade.

CALL AND EXAMINE!

Lower Springs, Dec. 1865. n23

This 1865 advertisement also mentions that Judge Henry Jones owned and operated a quartz mill.

The first gold miners found gold nuggets in streams and rivers. They initially "panned for gold" using tin pans. Later they developed wooden sluices that mechanically panned for the gold.

After the easy-to-find gold was gone, miners would look for quartz rock that contained small amounts of gold. They would pulverized this rock using a large stamping machine called a quartz mill. Once the quartz had been pulverized, it was washed with water to remove the heavier gold particles.

Judge Henry Jones offered this service to gold miners in the Shasta, California area per his advertisement.

Henry C. Jones Gets in the Newspaper Business in Pontiac in 1869

The 1878 history book gives the following account of Henry C. Jones and the newspaper business in Pontiac.

> Cook & Gagan started the Pontiac ***Sentinel*** in July, 1858, as a Republican paper. They sold to M. E. Collins, he to Stout & Decker, they to W. F. Denslow, he to Stout.
>
> Stout, in 1866, purchased a Taylor cylinder press at an expense of about $1,500 and soon after the entire concern was consumed by fire, with but little insurance with which to start anew. The paper was going again within two weeks, and in 1869 he sold to Jones & Renoe, who were publishing the ***Free Press,*** who consolidated the papers under the name of ***Sentinel and Press***.
>
> In July, 1873, H. C. Jones became sole proprietor, and changed the name again to the ***Sentinel,*** and in 1875, sold to F. L. Alles, who still owns and edits it. During all these changes it has remained Republican, and for twenty years ─the life of the Republican party ─ it has battled for the success of that party.
>
> Jones & Renoe commenced the publication of the ***Free Press,*** at Pontiac, in August, 1867. In 1869, it was consolidated with the ***Sentinel***.

Henry C. Jones, in his biography in the 1900 history book, recounts a similar story of his newspaper experience.

> Returning to Livingston County, Illinois, Mr. Jones entered the newspaper field, and with Mr. Renoe established the ***Free Press*** at Pontiac. Later he bought the ***Sentinel***, the oldest newspaper in the county, from James Stout, and, consolidating the two, published a paper known as the ***Sentinel and Press***. Mr. Renoe was a Democrat, while he was a Republican, but Mr. Renoe later withdrew, leaving Mr. Jones as sole editor and proprietor, and the paper resumed its old name as ***Sentinel***. He continued the publication of the ***Sentinel*** for nine years, during which time he built up a good circulation and made it the leading Republican paper in the county.

1870 Census

In this Census, Judge Henry Jones reported his age as 60 and he lived in Shasta, California. Judge Jones reported his occupation as a gun smith. He had $300 of personal estate value and owned $800 in real estate. This $1,100 of net worth in 1870 would be equivalent to $26,100 in today's dollars.

Also living in the household was Emily Jones, age 60, wife of Judge Henry Jones. Melinda Page, daughter of Henry and Emily Jones, age 34, was also living in the household. Her husband had been killed in the Civil War. James Page, age 5, son of Melinda Page was also living in the household. James Jones, no age given, also lived in the household.

In this Census, 32 year-old Henry C. Jones lived in the household of M. A. Renoe, age 36, and his wife, Eliza Renoe, age 30. Eliza was the sister of Henry C. Jones.

Henry C. Jones reported his occupation as a printer. He had $3000 of personal estate value and owned $800 in real estate. This $3,800 in net worth would be equivalent to $90,300 in today's dollars.

Edward E. Renoe, age 11, and Stella M. Renoe, age 9, children of Mark and Elvina Renoe, also lived in the household.

S. McPherson, age 17, lived in the household.

Wife of Judge Henry Jones Dies in 1871 in Shasta, California

Emily Jones, wife of Judge Henry Jones, died on May 18, 1871, in Shasta, California. The Pontiac Sentinel published the following death notice on June 8, 1871.

> Died at her residence, in Shasta, California, of paralysis, on Thursday, May 18th, 1871. Mrs. Emily Jones in her 60th year, wife of Judge H. Jones, formerly of this county.

On May 20, 1871, the Shasta Courier also published a death notice.

> Death of Emily Jones, about age 62 of Lower Sprints, wife of Henry died May18, 1871.

Henry C. Jones Marries in 1872 in Pontiac

In September of 1872, Henry C. Jones married Mary A. Bancroft in Pontiac. She was the daughter of Luther R. Bancroft (1814-1892) and Jane Wanzer (1812-1858). Henry C. Jones was 34 and Jane was 20 years of age when they married.

Ancestry.com reports that Henry and Mary Jones adopted three children. They adopted Charles Jones who was born around 1876. He is listed as living with Henry and Mary Jones in Dallas, Texas, in the 1880 U.S. Census. Details about his life, including his death date are unknown at this time.

Henry and Mary Jones adopted a daughter they named Helen M. Jones. Her birth date is unknown and she died on August 7, 1884, in Shasta, California.

Henry and Mary Jones adopted another daughter they named Nellie A. Jones. She was born in 1885 in Illinois. She married Roy G. Hershey in November of 1910 in Pontiac. She was a school teacher in Livingston County. Nellie died in May of 1944 in Pontiac. Nellie and Roy Hershey had no children. Nellie's first name is sometimes spelled "Nellie" and in other sources is spelled "Nelle."

Father of Mary A. Bancroft

The 1909 history book has a biography for the father of Mary A. Bancroft. A copy of this biography is shown below.

> **BANCROFT, Luther R.**. Pontiac, Livingston County, Illinois. Valuable as is character to a man during the active years of his life, it may be said to attain to its full significance only after he has passed away. Then, in the calm and deliberate judgment of those among whom he has lived and labored, is determined his true place in the community—then becomes manifest the sum of character in all its details.
>
> The career of the man whose name appears above fully illustrates this fact. Highly regarded as he was by his neighbors during his active life, his memory is cherished with an affection even greater than that in which he was held before his death.
>
> Luther R. Bancroft was of English blood, his parents coming from England to America before his birth. Born in Wayne County, N. Y., May 7, 1815, he was educated in the common schools near his home and early in life learned and worked at the tailor's trade.
>
> Later he engaged in the lumber business at Macedon in Wayne County, N.Y. In 1861 he came to Livingston County, Ill., and bought twenty-two acres of land a mile and a half east of Pontiac. which be speedily converted into a promising fruit farm.
>
> He began his enterprises with small fruit, including strawberries and other berries, reserving a few acres which he planted with trees and eventually developed into a fine orchard. It may be said of him that he was the first, in any business sense, to introduce fruit for domestic purposes in his part of the State and that, during the full term of his devotion to the business, his watchword was improvement.
>
> Mr. Bancroft married Miss Jane Wanzer, a native of New York, in 1836, and she bore him three children, one of whom is Mrs. Henry C. Jones of Pontiac, a name that is familiar in the country round about as that of the proprietor of an artificial ice plant, while the three others are deceased.
>
> Mrs. Bancroft died in March, 1856, and in March, 1859, Mr. Bancroft married as his second wife Miss Sarah H. Green, who was born at Florida, Montgomery County, N. Y., May 9, 1827, a daughter of Samuel and Mary (Herrick) Green, the former a native of Rhode Island, the latter a native of New York.

By this second marriage Mr. and Mrs. Bancroft became the parents of one son, James, who is in business with his brother-in-law, and a daughter, Edna, who is Mrs. James Donohue of Odell.

Early in life Mr. Bancroft became a Mason and was a consistent and active member of that beneficent order to the day of his death. With respect to religious conviction, the trend of his thought led him to the adoption of the Universal faith. Politically he affiliated with the Republican party. Before coming to Illinois he filled for many years the office of Postmaster at Macedon, N. Y. During his early years he was far from robust physically and, perhaps, did not entirely outgrow his physical infirmity during all his career. He died at his home near Pontiac March 30, 1892, and was buried in Pontiac cemetery.

His widow lived on the homestead until October, 1902, when she sold the place and became a member of the household of her son-in-law at Pontiac.

Typical Conditions in Pontiac in 1872

In 1972, the Daily Leader published a story about the early history of Pontiac and it is shown below.

September 8, 1972
Daily Leader

Pontiac has come a long way since 1872

Pontiac has come a long way since Sept. 11, 1872, when it was incorporated as a city and was facing many of the same problems 100 years ago that it has today: liquor control, streets and side-walks, poor drainage in the north section of Pontiac.

But then, as now, Pontiac had many advantages which made it a friendly and thriving community.

Pontiac was organized first as a village in 1856, when a meeting to plan its incorporation was held at the Courthouse Feb. 2, 1856. Among those present at the meeting, 38 voted to incorporate as a village and 3 voted against the proposal.

The citizens of Pontiac met at the Courthouse Feb. 12, 1856, and elected five trustees: Nelson Buck, Henry Jones, Samuel C. Ladd, Jason W. Strevell and Z. H. Nettleton.

The trustees were concerned with many matters including sidewalks, a cemetery, the sale of intoxicating liquor and drainage of the slough in the north section of Pontiac.

On June 1, 1856, a public meeting was held at the Courthouse to secure a cemetery for the village and as a result five acres were purchased from Henry W. Stevens of St. Charles for $20 per acre. In December, 1857, the ground was laid off into lots and blocks and the new cemetery was opened to the public.

According to an early history of Pontiac, for 20 years prior to 1857, the inhabitants of Pontiac had been very careless in burying their dead. Bodies were buried on residence lots not over three blocks from the square, but as soon as the cemetery was opened these were taken up and reburied there.

About the only questions of importance to come up before the village trustees after their organization, according to an early history book, was the sale of intoxicating liquors, the building of sidewalks, and the drainage of the big slough just north of the original town site.

The local politics of the town was concerned almost entirely with the liquor question and the two factions were about evenly divided. Part of the time the license party elected the board, while at other times the anti-license party held the reins of government. Bitter feeling prevailed until 1865 when the Princeton Charter was adopted which prohibited not only the sale of liquors but restrained the trustees from granting any authority whatever to saloon keepers to offer liquor for sale.

The charter was only satisfactory to its friends insofar as they were enabled to elect men on the board of trustees who would enforce its provisions to the letter of the law. Liquor was always sold, if not in one way, in another, and the question was never settled. The charter was repealed in 1872.

When the new board took office in 1857, there was not a sidewalk in town except those laid by the businessmen around the square. Money was scarce and there was insufficient funds in the treasury for local improvements.

It was proposed to build a sidewalk from the Chicago and Alton depot to the courthouse square and tax the abutting property owners for one-half the cost. This met with decided objection on the part of the property owners, but the measure passed the board. The sidewalk was not built until long afterwards and other improvements of a like character were slow in being made all over the city, the citizens

preferring to wade in the mud rather than defray half the cost of the improvement.

The drainage of the slough was a bone of contention for many years. Public meetings were held to discuss the matter and the board was petitioned to take some action, but it was always decided to postpone actual work and the slough was never thoroughly drained out until about 20 years later.

From 1837 until 1860 the settlement of Pontiac was slow, the census of 1860 giving the village a population of 728, five of whom were colored.

In 1865, the village began to boom to some extent. A company was formed to sink a coal shaft and at one time 100 miners were employed at the shaft. In 1866, the first bank in the village was opened, and the next year the Pontiac Woolen Mills was built. A band was organized in 1869, and soon after a baseball club was formed.

During the summer of 1869, the reform school was under construction, later known as the state prison, and the Fairbury, Pontiac and Northwestern Railroad was approaching the village from Streator.

Before 1869, Pontiac was called a "mudhole proper," but during that year village authorities began to pay some attention to the streets, especially those around the Courthouse square. The streets were drained in most cases by deep ditches running to the river, the center of the street being laid with broken stone from the quarry on the farm of Joseph S. Babcock. This stone piking lasted for several years and a few years later Pontiac was credited with having the best streets of any town of its size in the state.

In 1872, the year Pontiac was incorporated as a city, an important measure was adopted which had a marked effect on the appearance of the city and at the same time made it more substantial and handsome. The council passed an ordinance known as the "fire limits law" which prevented the erection of wooden buildings in any part of the business portion of the city. The ordinance came about after an extensive fire had recently consumed a large part of the business houses northwest of the public square. As a result, the new buildings about the square were all made of brick.

Henry C. Jones Leaves Pontiac for Texas in 1875

According to both the 1878 history book and his biography in the 1900 history book, Henry Jones sold his Pontiac newspaper and moved to Texas in 1875.

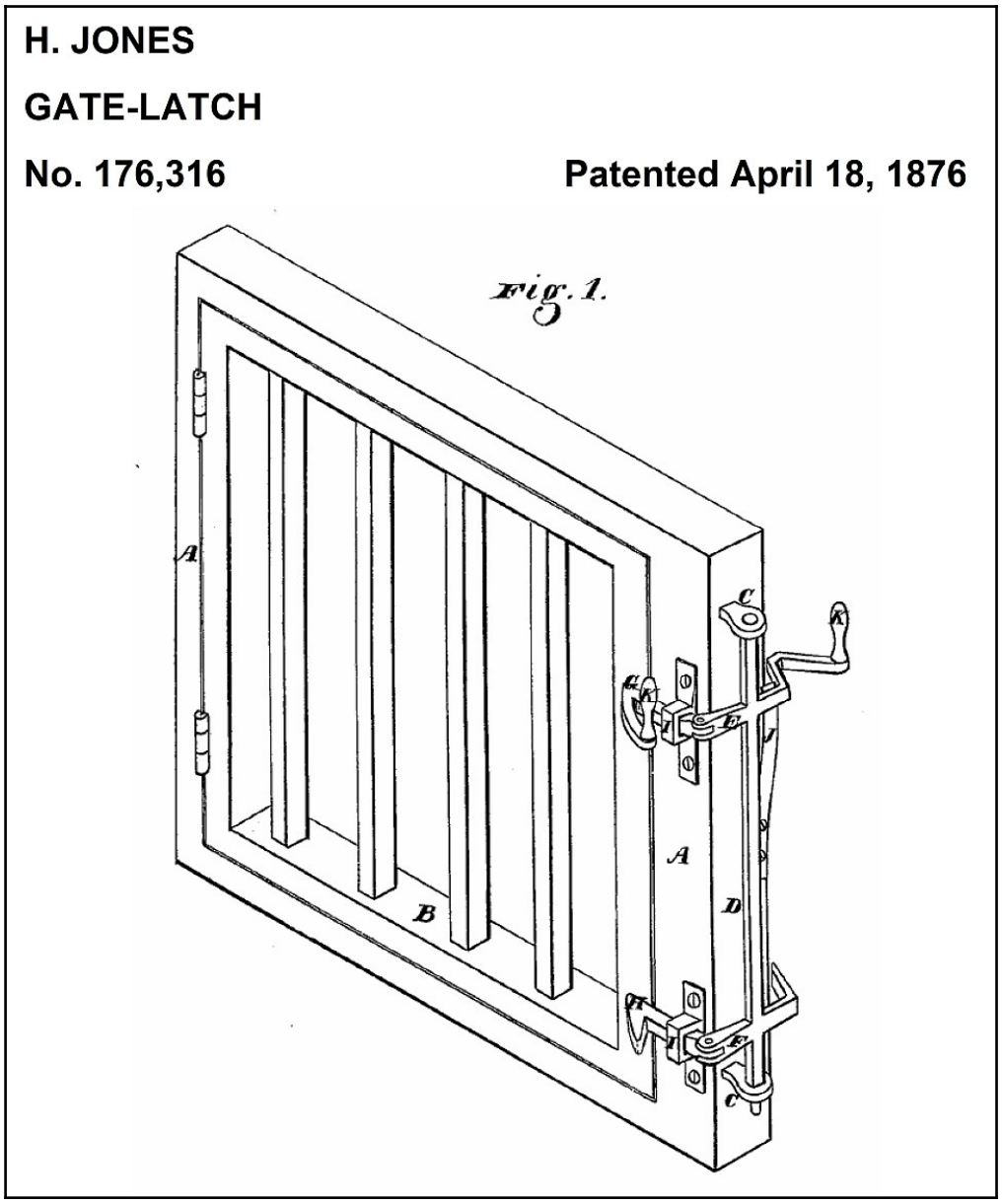
In the 1900 history book, Henry C. Jones recounted his activities while in Texas.

> Selling out in 1875, he went to Texas, and engaged in the auxiliary newspaper business in Dallas, getting out patent insides. In this enterprise he was remarkably successful, having a list of two hundred and sixty-two local papers to supply. He also published the Planter and Farmer, and in that undertaking was also successful, but on account of the ill health of his wife, he disposed of his interests in Texas and removed to Santa Cruz, California, where he owns a valuable prune ranch.
>
> In 1892 Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac and acquired a three-fifths interest in the electric light plant, having helped to develop the enterprise. This company was incorporated as the Pontiac Light, Heat & Power Company, and has grown to large proportions. Mr. Jones served as its president for seven years, though he recently sold his interest in the same.

His biography does not identify what year he left Texas and moved to Santa Cruz, California.

Judge Henry Jones Gets a U.S. Patent for a Gate in 1876

In 1876, Judge Henry Jones, living in Shasta, California, applied for and received a U.S. Patent for his idea for an improved latch for gates. The patent sketch is shown below.



Pioneer Settler Charles Jones Dies in 1876

The November 30, 1885, Pantagraph published the obituary below for Livingston County pioneer settler Charles Jones.

> December 4, 1885
> Pantagraph
>
> —Charles Jones, familiarly called "Uncle Charley," one of the oldest settlers of Livingston County, died at the home of his daughter, Mrs. Orrin Phelps, in Fairbury, on Thursday evening, 26th, aged 88 years. He was blind for the last eight years, and seldom left his room during that time, his pipe being his constant companion.
>
> Mr. Jones was born in Bordentown, New Jersey, December 11, 1797, and came west at an early day, being the first settler where the village of Forrest now stands. He afterward moved to Pontiac, where he lived till the close of the war, since which time he has lived with his children in and about Fairbury. He had seven sons and two daughters, four of whom survive him, and we deem it worth of note that his last days were spent in a house where lived four generations of his family, viz: His daughter, Mrs. Orrin Phelps, and husband, their son and wife, Mr. and Mrs. Al Phelps, and their children.
>
> The funeral of the deceased took place on Saturday morning from his late residence, the remains being interred in the Cooper cemetery, west of Indian Grove, and the services were conducted by Rev. C. D. Merit.

Charles Jones was buried in Cooper Cemetery, southwest of Fairbury, Illinois.

1880 U.S. Census

In this Census, Henry and Mary Jones lived at 1005 Wood Street in Dallas, Texas. Henry was 41 and Mary was 28 years old. Henry listed his occupation as a publisher.

Also living in the household was son Charles Jones, age 4, and brother James P. Jones, age 30. James P. Jones listed his occupation as telegraph operator.

Business Partner of Judge Henry Jones Dies in 1889

The Fairbury Blade newspaper published an obituary for Edwin Charles Jones on September 7, 1889. Edwin C. Jones was a friend and business partner of Judge Henry Jones.

September 7, 1889
Fairbury Blade

A Pioneer Dead

Edwin Charles Jones died at his home near Oregon City, Oregon, at 11 p. m., August 20, 1889. He was born in Bordentown, New Jersey, in 1826 and came with his father's family to Livingston County in 1837, locating where now stands the good town of Forrest, then known as Jones Grove, afterwards Beards Grove and Kracks Grove, after the Honorable I. J. Krack, who laid out the town on the completion of the TP&W in 1858 and 1859.

In 1852, in company with Henry Jones (afterwards County Judge of Livingston County) John and Theodore Popejoy, he started to California with ox teams. After the usual six months trip, he arrived in California, and engaged in gold mining, in the placer mines, near Shasta. In 1855 he returned from California, bringing with him, something over $4,000 in gold, which was then considered quite a fortune. He was married this year to Miss Mary Cook, of Racine, Wisconsin. Still remaining a partner of Judge Jones, they engaged in mercantile business in Pontiac, erecting for the purpose the first brick store put up in the city, which is still standing, being afterwards owned by Captain Turner.

About the time of the Pike Peak gold excitement, 1858, they closed out their store. Judge Jones (who was the father of H. C. Jones, many years editor of the Pontiac Sentinel) went to Pikes Peak with J. E. Morrow and other well-remembered Pontiacers, thence to California, while Edwin C. engaged in farming a few miles east of Pontiac, in Owego Township. In 1867 he sold his farm and shortly after he crossed the plains with his family, locating in Clackamas County, Oregon. This was a most dangerous and trying trip from the time of crossing the Missouri river till reaching the justly famed valley of the Willamette. The Indians committed the most atrocious murders ahead and behind them, it was the year that Nelson Buck, another old time citizen, and his party were murdered in Nebraska, while making government surveys. It became so dangerous that the government prohibited all emigration except where emigrants organized in wagon trains of about one

hundred men each. Mr. Jones was elected captain of his train and commissioned as such by the commanding officer of the department. He conducted his train through safely and to the satisfaction of all who composed, meeting with resistance at a few stream crossings.

On arriving in Oregon, he purchased land from his old friend, Rev. John Darnall, another of Livingston County's most upright and honorable pioneers, who emigrated with his own and his son, Nicholas's, family in 1865. With limited means, other than nerve and muscle, he set to work to carve a farm and home out of an Oregon forest of fir and cedar. After more than twenty years of desperate effort his labor was successful and he has left his wife and children, three sons and one daughter, in possession of a plain, honest, and beautiful home. The grand orchard hanging full of choicest fruit, the granary filled with wheat. He was a home builder rather than a money maker. Rightly measured, his life was a success. He was to a fault, if such could be, everyone who knew him was his friend and he theirs. Physically strong, of good address, quiet demeanor, strictly temperate in all things, he enjoyed life, loved his home, and its mountain scenes. By his rule of life all could live well, for he earned by intelligent labor more than his living.

During his younger days in Illinois, he gained a reputation as a great hunter. Till as late as 1860, the vicinity of Burr Oak, Oliver's Grove, Corn Grove, and Five Mile Grove, known to all old timers, could be found many a buck's horn which fell by the unerring aim of his long stalked, hickory rain rodded, greased patch loading rifle: these horns he invariably marked with three nicks made with his heavy hunting knife. In the fall and early winter many a wagon trip was made to the village of Chicago with wheat and deer hides and saddles of venison, returning with salt, ammunition and such absolute necessities.

During his life in Oregon, notwithstanding the arduous task of almost quarrying a good farm and home out of rock and forest, he methodically found time each year, after the fruit and grain harvest, to make a prospecting and hunting trip to the wild and rugged cascade range, armed with a rifle, pan, pick, and compass. He was a formidable hunter and expert prospector, finding placer gold and silver quartz in many places. While not able to find gold in paying quantities he was among the first to discover and demonstrate, to the fortune of many, that silver bearing quartz and other valuable minerals were hidden in great quantity in the western slope of the cascades.

Thirty-five miles from his home up the mountain slope towards Mr. Jefferson he with the aid of his sons, built a commodious house at the forks of the Molala, a mountain torrent filled with trout and still another 65 miles out, in what is now known as the bald mountain mining district, to either place no vehicle could ever go. He used these cabins as sort of headquarters for prospecting excursions. They are ever free to all comers. The deer, elk, and bear killed on these expeditions were carefully canned and carried out on pack animals, bringing a good price in Portland. For miles in all directions he made mountain trails, located springs of water, quartz leads and place prospects, to which now a railroad will soon be built. The writer, in a tramp over these mountains, going up nearly an angle of 45 degrees, tired, thirsty and weary, saw a sign plainly written on a cedar slab, "40 feet down do the right you will find a good spring of water. E. C. Jones."

This good man, a pioneer who always made it easier for those who came after him, has gone to meet all there is in store for humankind, in the unexplored hereafter.

Byron Phelps
Seattle, Washington
Aug. 22, 1889

1890 U.S. Census

Unfortunately, the 1890 Census records are not available because they were destroyed many years ago in a fire.

Judge Henry Jones Dies in California in 1893

The first obituary published for Judge Henry Jones was in the June 5, 1893, Sacramento Record Union newspaper.

June 5, 1893
The Sacramento Record Union

DEATH OF HENRY JONES

An Old Citizen and Pioneer of Shasta County Dead

He Lived and Died a Frontiersman, and Was a Typical American and Californian

A telegram this morning announces the death of Judge Henry Jones, a well-known pioneer and respected resident of Shasta County, who died at the age of nearly 85years.

Judge Jones was born in Hamilton County, 0hio, November 17, 1808, and has all his life been a Western pioneer. He removed from his native State to Indiana, from there to Illinois, thence to Iowa, when that State was yet a Territory. In 1849, he organized a company of gold-hunters and piloted them across the plains to Shasta County and located at Lower Springs, near the old town of Shasta. With the exception of an interval of four years he has been a citizen of that town and county ever since.

In 1855 he returned to Illinois and in the fall of 1857 was elected County Judge in Livingston County, but resigned in 1859 to conduct another party across the plains and to Shasta County, and has been a resident of that county continuously until the day of his death.

Judge Jones leaves four children to mourn his death, two daughters in Illinois, one daughter, Mrs. M. J. Paige, in Shasta, and one son, Henry C. Jones, a well-known resident of Santa Cruz. Among his grandsons are James E. Paige of Shasta and Charles L. Paige, at present connected with the RECORD-UNION reportorial staff.

Judge Henry Jones was a typical American pioneer, and belonged to a class of men to whom their country owes much for their sterling qualities of unswerving loyalty, invincible integrity and undaunted spirit.

Starting in life fortified with three weeks' schooling, the subject of this sketch was confronted with all the hardships known to our Western pioneers in the early development of the vast territory west of Ohio: and, although he never had another opportunity of attending school, he did not

lack a thorough, practical and comprehensive education, and stood always among the leaders of his community.

He held many positions of responsibility and trust during his lifetime, but always preferred the frontier, and was one of those foremost in pushing further West, until, upon the shore of the Pacific, they were compelled to pause.

His life was one of adventure throughout, and Judge Jones could relate incidents enough, coming under his own observation, to form a comprehensive and interesting history of the great western portion of the continent, and especially of this State.

He conducted three trains of wagons across the great plains and mountains, encountering all the hardships, dangers and difficulties that could obtain. He passed through trials of endurance that taxed to their utmost both mental and physical strength, and which formed in him an integrity and firmness of character in all emergencies, and developed a wonderful measure of physical hardihood and self reliance.

Until within a few days of his death he lived upon a homestead which he entered and "proved up," taking it from the Government timber lands in western Shasta County, where the of colony of Whitmore is now located. There he cleared of heavy timber about twenty acres of land and put it out in choice fruit trees, which are now flourishing and form one of the finest young orchards of the locality.

He was thoroughly familiar with the topography of the section, the surveys and landmarks, and rendered valuable services to a large number of settlers in locating them upon railroad and Government lands.

Until with the past two or three years, although over 80 years of age, he would frequently walk distances of forty or fifty miles. He was a sure shot with the rifle, and took great pleasure in "lining" bees to their forest homes, in trout, fishing, trapping and other sports. Owing to his familiarity with camp life and his genial disposition, he was always a welcome addition to a party in camp or in the woods, and numbered among his friends and acquaintances most of the old residents of the county and many others.

In his death Shasta County and the State loses one of the oldest pioneers, and a man who, without seeking preferment or distinction, was identified with much of its history.

In the loss of such men a distinct and characteristic type of the true American is passing. They are perhaps representative of the original and

> distinguishing characters of our history and Government, fashioned by the circumstances under which they lived, bred, and reared upon the soil in most instances, under distinct and separate conditions, apart from the more cosmopolitan and conventional influences which bear upon later generations.

Second Obituary for Judge Henry Jones

A second obituary was published in the Pontiac Sentinel newspaper a few days later.

> June 9, 1893
> Pontiac Sentinel
>
> **Judge Jones Dead**
>
> Word has been received here of the death of Judge Henry Jones, which occurred at Shasta, California, June 3rd. He was judge of this county away back in 1856. He has resided in California since 1860. He leaves three daughters and one son — Mrs. M. A. Renoe, and Mrs. George Foster, both of this place, Mrs. Page of Shasta, California, and Henry C. Jones of Santa Cruz. The latter, with M. A. Renoe, was publisher of the SENTINEL for several years.

These obituaries report that Henry C. Jones was living in Santa Cruz, California, when his father died in 1893. In his biography in the 1900 history book, he recounted that he moved from Santa Cruz to Pontiac in 1892.

> In 1892 Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac and acquired a three-fifths interest in the electric light plant, having helped to develop the enterprise.

Article About Farm of Judge Henry Jones

A few weeks after his death, an article was published about the farm of Judge Henry Jones.

July 1, 1893

Shasta, California Free Press

A Mountain Trip

We fully realized this week what a splendid opportunity is open to home seekers, with small capital, to secure a mountain ranch, with plenty of water, rich meadow land, unlimited timber, and air redolent with the odor of the pines. There are hundreds of such places in Shasta county now occupied, and hundreds more open to location.

Why those homeless people, working for a small salary in our crowded cities and towns, and who have accumulated a few hundred dollars, do not make use of their homestead rights and carve out beautiful homes in the mountain regions of California, must be because they do not know where these places are, and have never taken the trouble to find out.

On Saturday morning last we made a business trip up the Tamarack road some forty-five miles distant from Redding, and had the pleasure of passing and viewing several of these mountain homes, and right on the road saw land well-watered and awaiting someone to cultivate the virgin soil; and we thought that if then were numerous spots on the main traveled road that would make acceptable homes, certainly off the road in the forests of pine there must be many others.

Leaving here in the morning, we drove to the old town of Millville, which by the way, looks as natural as of old, and taking the road up Clover creek, had the pleasure of noting quite a number of prosperous ranches, among them the Myers place, the production from which have for several years taken good prizes at our district fair.

Climbing the steep grade leading up from Clover creek and past the Herr-ford ranch, we traveled for miles across rolling hills of adobe soil, much of which is cultivated. Soon after leaving this "basin," as it is called, and about 12 o'clock, we arrived at the W. A. Smith ranch, where we were kindly received by Mr. and Mrs. Smith, and the children—old friends, and former residents of Redding. We spent a couple of hours with them quite pleasantly, partaking of their hospitality. They are comfortably fixed, and by industry and with plenty of water raise most everything they care to plant.

For several miles beyond the Smith place the country is quite rocky, and does not seem quite so productive, except, perhaps, small patches of ground along old Cow Creek. The country also gets more hilly, and after crossing the bridge near the lower place the traveler begins to enter the timber, and where, like all pine regions of Shasta county, the soil is red and alluvial.

We passed several nice little places, and about 5 o'clock arrived at Daily's ranch, about six miles this side of the summit—a splendid ranch with about eighty acres under cultivation, rich meadow land, where the wild hay grows to rejoice the horses and cattle, and where the weary traveler delights to sup and spend a comfortable, restful night. Here's where one could live on bread and butter alone, washed down with rich cream. The Dailys' are a well-governed family; no jars, no hitches; everybody pleasant, accommodating and companionable. Mrs. Daily, a motherly soul, administers in such an unobtrusive way to every want of her guests.

After a restful night we pursued our journey ten miles further, enjoying the mountain air and appreciating a view of the many different kinds of mountain pine, fir and cedar, as also the orchards and neat dwellings by the way.

The Jones place especially attracted our attention—so neat, homelike and prosperous did everything look. This place was cleared and planted by Henry Jones, who was recently buried in the Shasta cemetery, and it is an example of what an old man can accomplish.

All the improvements were made after Mr. Jones had passed his seventieth birthday. A ten-acre orchard. of prune trees, perhaps two years old, especially attracted our attention. Every tree appeared to be thrifty, and there was not a spear of grass to be seen, so thoroughly had the soil been cultivated.

G. W. Palmer also has a pleasant home in this locality, and Stitcher, the gentleman who won the prize one year for exhibiting the largest peaches, has a ranch susceptible of great improvement. Why we visited this section is of no special interest to our readers, and we print the above simply to show what opportunities exist in the mountain sections of Shasta county for pleasant, profitable and healthful homes.

It almost seems that one should live forever in such pure, bracing air, where the trees grow straight, their tops almost reaching the heavens, thus furnishing an example for man to follow—to live a life void of offense toward God and man, and amid every crooked transaction, with hands lifted up to grasp those truths to be learned from sweet communion with

> nature. In a locality where everything seems pure, purity of thought and action must prevail. We enjoyed our trip very much, and only regret our inability to visit the mountains oftener and remains longer.

Henry C. Jones Moves from California in 1892 or 1893

He recounted in his biography in the 1900 history book that he moved back to Pontiac in 1892.

> In 1892 Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac and acquired a three-fifths interest in the electric light plant, having helped to develop the enterprise. This company was incorporated as the Pontiac Light, Heat & Power Company, and has grown to large proportions. Mr. Jones served as its president for seven years, though he recently sold his interest in the same.

The 1893 issue of the Western Electrician magazine had a short article about the formation of this new company.

> **ELECTRIC LIGHTING**
>
> The Pontiac, Ill., Electric Light, Heat & Power company, capital of $40,000 has been incorporated. Henry A. and A. P. Foster and C. M. Hamilton are the proprietors of the enterprise.

CHAPTER 7

The 1894 to 1971 Jones Family Era

Henry C. Jones Biography in 1900 Livingston County History Book

In the 1900 history book, there is a biography for Henry C. Jones. In this book, there was no biography for Judge Henry Jones. The complete biography of Henry C. Jones from the 1900 history book is shown below.

HENRY C. JONES

Henry C. Jones, a well-known citizen of Pontiac, Illinois, was born in Cicero, Hamilton county, Indiana, February 11, 1838, a son of Henry Jones, who was born near Cincinnati, Ohio, where during his youth he learned the blacksmith's trade. When a young man he removed to Cicero, Indiana, and turned his attention to mercantile business. Here he married Emily De Moss, a daughter of James De Moss, a French Huguenot and a carpenter by trade, who passed his last days as a farmer in Livingston county, Illinois.

The parents of our subject came to this county in 1845, but after a short time spent here they removed to the territory of Iowa, locating at Bellevue, where our subject began his education.

In 1847 the family returned to this county, and after following farming for a short time the father, in 1849, went to California, where for several years he was engaged in mining and mercantile pursuits.

Returning to Pontiac in 1855 he again engaged in mercantile business here, and was, in 1857 elected county judge.

In 1859, resigning his office of county judge here, he returned to the Pacific slope in company with our subject and fifteen young men. He engaged in mercantile business in Shasta, California, and became one of the most prominent and prosperous men of that place. He was elected a member of the board of supervisors, and was also alcalde (or mayor) of Shasta. In connection with his other business he was quite extensively engaged in gold mining. He did much to build up the town and was recognized as one of its most influential and prominent citizens.

After the Civil war he supported the Republican party and took a leading part in public affairs. He died in Shasta in 1893, and the mother of our subject died in the same place in 1868 [error, she died 1871], leaving five children, of whom Henry C. was third in order of birth.

During his boyhood our subject attended the public schools of Pontiac, and when his education was completed clerked in his father's store until going to California in 1859. They made the trip overland with horseless vehicles (ox teams) and were six months upon the way. They passed through St. Joseph, Missouri, went up the Platte when the Indians in that region were quite hostile, and passed through what is now Ogden, Utah, and through Nevada. Arriving at Shasta, California, which was a good mining town, father and son opened a store and as merchants soon built up a good trade. For some years they were interested in quartz mining.

Our subject continued in business with his father until 1864, when he enlisted in the volunteer service and was elected lieutenant of his company, but when they were put in barracks and the regulars sent to the front, he resigned. That he might see some active service he went, via Panama, to New York with the intention of enlisting there, but the war ended before he found the opportunity.

Returning to Livingston county, Illinois, Mr. Jones entered the newspaper field, and with Mr. Renoe established the Free Press at Pontiac. Later he bought the Sentinel, the oldest newspaper in the county, from James Stout, and, consolidating the two, published a paper known as the Sentinel and Press. Mr. Renoe was a Democrat, while he was a Republican, but Mr. Renoe later withdrew, leaving Mr. Jones as sole editor and proprietor, and the paper resumed its old name as Sentinel. He continued the publication of the Sentinel for nine years, during which time he built up a good circulation and made it the leading Republican paper in the county.

Selling out in 1875, he went to Texas, and engaged in the auxiliary newspaper business in Dallas, getting out patent insides. In this enterprise he was remarkably successful, having a list of two hundred and sixty-two local papers to supply. He also published the Planter and Farmer, and in that undertaking was also successful, but on account of the ill health of his wife, he disposed of his interests in Texas and removed to Santa Cruz, California, where he owns a valuable prune ranch.

In 1892 Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac and acquired a three-fifths interest in the electric light plant, having helped to develop the enterprise. This company was incorporated as the Pontiac Light, Heat & Power Company, and has grown to large proportions. Mr. Jones served as its president for seven years, though he recently sold his interest in the same.

He has been a taxpayer in Pontiac for over thirty years and is recognized as one of her most progressive citizens, giving his support to those objects which he believes will prove of public benefit. Socially he is a member of the Pontiac Lodge, No. 294, F.& A.M.

> On the 25th of September, 1873, Mr. Jones was united in marriage with Miss Mary A. Bancroft, a native of New York, and a daughter of Luther Bancroft, of Pontiac. They have one daughter, Nellie A., who with her mother is a member of the Methodist Episcopal church of Pontiac.

Henry C. Jones Purchases Jones House in 1899

According to Robert Arnold Schlosser in the September 27, 1984 issue of the ***Update*** newsletter, Henry C. Jones bought the Jones House in 1899.

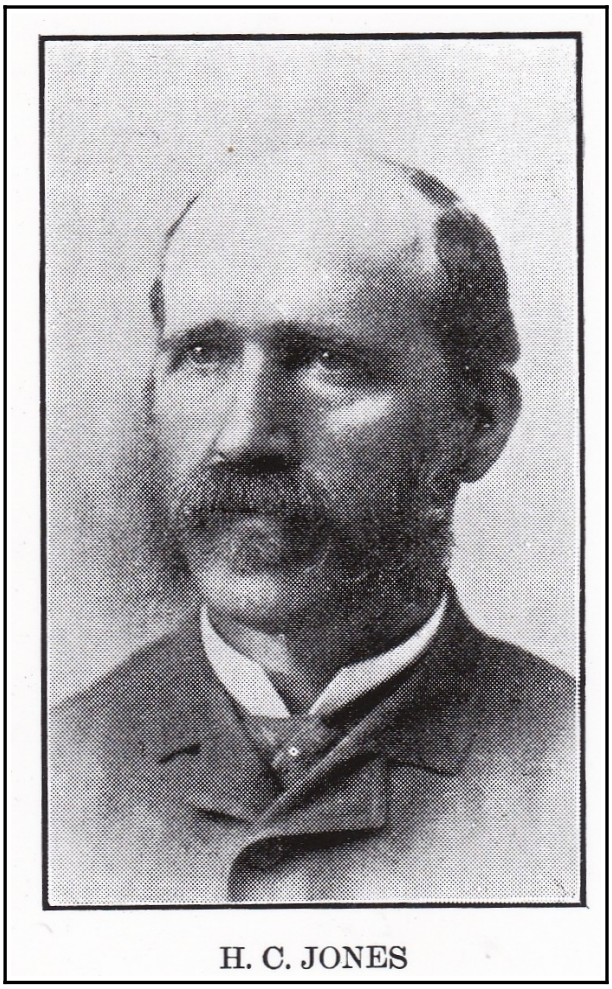
> Henry C. Jones purchased lots one and two from Philip Arman on August 5, 1899. At that point in time, Henry had attained the age of sixty-one years. Although Henry may have had several interest, ice had a strong appeal. He and James Bancroft, his brother-in-law, formed a partnership known as Jones and Bancroft, operators of the Pontiac Ice Company. The company had an ice house on East Park Street, near the northeast corner of Chautauqua Park, and a downtown office.

1900 U.S. Census

In this Census, Henry C. Jones lived at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac and he was 61 years old. His wife, Mary Jones, age 48, was living with him. They reported that two children lived with them. Nellie Jones and Henry Jones were both 15 years old in this Census. Henry C. Jones reported his occupation as a capitalist. He reported that he had a mortgage on the house.

Circa 1900 Photograph of Henry C. Jones

In 2024, a photograph of Henry C. Jones was found in the archives of the artifacts in the Livingston County Historical Society. The original source of this undated photograph is unknown at this time.



H. C. JONES

Colorizing the Henry C. Jones Photo

Software from Fotor.Com was used to colorize this old photo.

H. C. JONES

1901 Property Tax Records for 314 E. Madison Street

According to the old property tax records in the basement of the Historic Courthouse in Pontiac, Henry C. Jones began paying the property tax on the Jones House in 1901. The property tax information is shown in spreadsheet form below.

Year	Block No.	Lot No.	Address	Common Name	Taxpayer	Value	Total Tax	Comment
1896	51	2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Philip Arruaw?	NA	NA	A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901
1897		2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Philip Arruaw?	NA	NA	A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901
1898		2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Philip Arruaw?	NA	NA	A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901
1899		2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Philip Arruaw?	NA	NA	A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901
1900		2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	Philip Arruaw?	NA	NA	A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901
1901		2	314 E. Madison	Jones House	H.C. Jones			A. McKay owned Lot 1 in 1896-1901

Henry C. Jones apparently did not begin to pay the full property taxes until tax year 1901 per the old property tax records.

A. McKay

Research revealed that Alexander McKay was an early resident of Dwight. By the 1900 Census, he had moved to Pontiac. His 1913 obituary is shown below.

> August 1, 1913
> Pantagraph
>
> **ALEXANDER MCKAY DIES**
>
> **Former Resident of Pontiac Passes Away in a Chicago Hospital.**
>
> Pontiac, July 25. Alexander McKay, a former resident of this city, and county, died suddenly at a hospital in Chicago Thursday following an operation. The funeral and burial took place this afternoon at Dwight. Mr. McKay had been making his home in Chicago for some time with his son Harry.
>
> Mr. McKay was born in Montreal, Quebec, January 3, 1842. In 1886 he was elected country treasurer of Livingston County, which position he held for four years, and then re-engaged in the real estate and loan business in this city, being later elected to the office of justice of the peace, and later served for a number of years as supervisor, and at one time was mayor of the city, being elected in 1891. He also served three terms and was a member of the district board of education here for many years.
>
> He was united in marriage November 23, 1865, to Miss Louisa Lytle, of Dwight, to which union two sons were born. James L., of this city, and Harry A. of Chicago. Mrs. McKay preceded him in death several years ago.

Pontiac Ice Company in 1902

The May 23, 1902 Pantagraph published the story below about Henry Jones and his ice company.

The Pontiac Ice Company, H. C. Jones proprietor, was delivering samples today of the new artificial ice he is now making. The ice is hard and reasonably clear for the first runs and seems to have excellent lasting qualities.

Henry C. Jones Gold Mining Story in 1909 History Book

Henry C. Jones, son of Henry and Emily Jones, wrote a 2,600 word account of the California gold mining adventures for the 1909 history book. This account is shown in a previous chapter.

1910 U.S. Census

In this Census, Henry C. Jones reported that he was 72 years old and he was the proprietor of an ice company. He still had a mortgage on his house. His wife, Mary A. Jones was age 57. On the census form, they listed Nellie A. Jones as age 25 and that she was an adopted daughter. Nellie was the only child living in the household.

1920 U.S. Census

In this Census, Henry C. Jones reported that he was 82 years old and had no occupation. He was living at 314 E. Madison Street. His wife, Mary A. Jones, was 68 years old. A minor, Ella Coleman, age 17, was living in the household.

Henry C. Jones Dies in Pontiac in 1921

Henry C. Jones died in Pontiac at the age of 83. His obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

> The Pantagraph
> June 14, 1921
> **PROMINENT PONTIAC BUSINESS MAN DIES**
>
> **Henry C. Jones, Former Newspaper Publisher, Answers Final Summons**
>
> Pontiac, June 13. — Henry C. Jones, who first came to Pontiac in 1845 and a man who has always been closely associated with its history, died at 10 o'clock this forenoon at the family residence, 314 East Madison street. Death was due to pneumonia, he having been ill less than a week.
>
> Mr. Jones was born in Cicero, Hamilton County, Indiana, February 11, 1838, a son of Mr. and Mrs. Henry Jones, Sr. In 1845 his parents removed to Pontiac, then a straggling village. They remained here but a short time when they moved to the territory of Iowa, locating near Bellevue, where Mr. Jones began his early education. In 1847, the family returned to this county and Mr. Jones completed his education in the schools of Pontiac. He afterwards entered his father's store here as a clerk, where he remained until 1859. In that year, Mr. Jones started overland for California via the ox team route, the trip consuming six months time.

Arriving at Shasta, California, Mr. Jones and his father opened a store and soon had developed a good trade. For some years they were interested in placer and later in quartz gold mining.

In 1863 he left San Francisco by steamer for Nicaragua and making the trip to the isthmus, took a steamer for New York, returning later to Pontiac.

He entered the newspaper business and worked for a time in a printing office. He later worked for a Mr. Dash at Eureka, taking charge of the printing office of the former. During the six months he worked there he saved $600. Later that year he planned to go into the newspaper business at Warsaw, Missouri. He became ill with typhoid fever however, and returned to Pontiac.

In company of the late M. A. Renoe, he established the Free Press here. Later he purchased the Sentinel, the oldest newspaper in the county, from James Stout and consolidated the two under the name Sentinel and Press. Mr. Renoe being a Democrat and Mr. Jones a Republican, Mr. Renoe shortly afterwards withdrew and Mr. Jones revived the name of Sentinel for the paper. He continued the publication of the Sentinel for the paper. He continued the publication of the Sentinel for nine years, disposing of his interests at the end of that time.

After disposing of his newspaper business here to Fred Alles, Mr. Jones went to California, this time over the newly constructed Union Pacific railroad. The following year he returned to Pontiac and later went to Texas, where he engaged in the auxiliary newspaper business at Dallas, Texas, supplying a list of 262 local newspapers and also engaging in the publication of the Planter and Farmer.

Because of the ill health of his wife, he sold his interests there and moved to Santa Cruz, California, where he resided until 1892. Returning to Pontiac at that time he purchased a two-thirds interest in the electric light plant here and helped to develop the plant which was later incorporated as the Pontiac Light, Heat and Power company, serving as its president for seven years. Later he organized the Pontiac Ice and Fuel company and established the city's first artificial ice plant which he recently disposed of because of his failing health. For the past several years he has lived a retired life.

He was married in this city Sept. 25, 1873, to Miss Mary Bancroft, a native of New York state, who survives, together with one daughter, Mrs. Nellie Hershey, of Birmingham, Ala. One daughter, Helen M., preceded

him in death Aug. 7, 1874, at Shasta, Cal. He is also survived by one sister, Mrs. Eliza Renoe, of Clay City, Ill. His father died in 1893 at Shasta, Cal., and his mother in 1868 at the same place. A brother and three sisters also preceded him.

1905 Real Estate Transactions Recorded After Death of Henry C. Jones in 1921

The 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract states that on March 11, 1905, Henry and Mary Jones sold lot 1 to the east of their lot 2 to James L. Bancroft for $3,000.

There was house on lot 1 on the 1910 Sanborn map. This transaction of $3,000 in 1905 would be equivalent to $100,300 in today's dollars. James L. Bancroft (1861-1930) was likely the brother of Mary A. Bancroft. The deed was executed in 1905 but not recorded until June 24, 1921, shortly after Henry C. Jones died on June 13, 1921.

On September 1, 1921, Mary Jones took out a series of five year mortgages against the house for $1,000, $500, and $200 at a 7% interest rate.

So after Henry C. Jones died in 1921, his widow, Mary Jones continued to live in the house at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac.

Mary Jones Paid Off Her Mortgages by 1929

The 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract states that Mary A. Jones paid off all mortgages and ownership of house returned to her.

1930 U.S. Census

In this Census, Mary Jones was 77 years old and a widow living at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac. She owned the house and it was worth $2500. The value of $2500 would be equivalent to $45,100 in today's dollars.

She also owned a radio set. Nobody else lived in the household.

Widow Mary Jones Sells the House to Her Daughter in 1939

According to the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, on July 31, 1939, widow Mary A. Jones sold Lot 2 in Block 51 to her adopted daughter Nelle J. Hershey for $2,000 in 1939. This sales price would be equivalent to $43,300 in today's dollars.

On September 13, Nelle J. Hershey and her husband R. G. Hershey took out a $1,500 mortgage against the house at a 6% interest rate. This would be equivalent to $32,500 today.

1940 U.S. Census

In this Census, Mary Jones was 88 years old and a widow living at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac. Mary reported that she had finished the 4th year of high school.

Also living in the household were Roy G. Hershey, age 57, and Nellie Hershey, age 55. Nellie was the adopted daughter of Henry and Mary Jones.

Nelle Hershey Pays off 1st Loan and Takes out New Loan in 1941

According to the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, Nelle J. Hershey and her husband R. G. Hershey paid off their first mortgage. They then took out a new mortgage for $1800 at a 6% interest rate.

Mary Jones, Wife of Henry C. Jones Dies in 1942

Her obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

> September 8, 1942
> Pantagraph
>
> **Mrs. Mary B. Jones**
>
> Pontiac — Mrs. Mary B. Jones, 90, died at 9:30 p.m. Monday at her home in Pontiac. She had been ill for the last several years.
>
> The body was taken to the Raleigh J. Harris funeral home. Other funeral arrangements are incomplete.
>
> She was born Sept. 23, 1852 at Macedon, N. Y., daughter of Luther and Jane Wamzer Bancroft. She came to Livingston County in 1861 and attended and later taught at schools in the county.
>
> She was married to Henry C. Jones Sept. 23, 1872 at Pontiac. He preceded her in death June 13, 1921.

Death of Last Surviving Child of Henry C. and Mary Jones Dies in 1944

According to Ancestry.com, Henry and Mary Jones adopted three children. The last known surviving child was Nellie Jones and she died in 1944. Her obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

> The Pantagraph
> May 27, 1944
>
> **Mrs. R. G. Hershey Dies in Pontiac**
>
> **Prominent Woman Ill Short Time**
>
> PONTIAC ─ Mrs. Nelle Jones Hershey, 58, wife of Roy G. Hershey, secretary of Pontiac Chamber of Commerce, died Friday morning at St. James hospital following a short illness.
>
> Funeral services will be held at 3 p.m. Sunday at the Raleigh J. Harris Funeral home with the Rev. A. B. Morrow officiating. Entombment will be in Abbey mausoleum in Pontiac Southside Cemetery.

Mrs. Hersey was born December 25, 1885, in Chicago, the daughter of Henry and Mary Jones. She came to Pontiac with her parents at the age of 14 and attended Pontiac High School and Grand Prairie seminary.

She was married to Roy G. Hershey November 1, 1910, in Pontiac. She had been active in musical circles and in affairs of the Presbyterian church in which Mr. Hershey held several pastorates. She was also at one time director of the First Methodist church choir and soloist with Billy Sunday.

She was a member of the Order of Eastern Star and Samaria Shrine. She is survived by her husband.

Since none of the three adopted children of Henry and Mary Jones had any children, this was the end of the bloodline for the Henry C. Jones family tree.

Roy Hershey Continues Living in the Jones House After His Wife Died in 1944

According to the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, Nelle Jones died without leaving a will. A week after Nelle died, her husband, Roy G. Hershey started the probate process to legally inherit the house.

As part of the probate process, Roy Hershey gave sworn testimony about his wife. This testimony is shown below.

> Said Nelle J. Hershey was married only once, and said marriage was celebrated with R. G. Hershey; of said marriage no children were born; that the said Nelle J. Hershey never adopted any child or children; that the parents of said Nelle J. Hershey both pre-deceased her, the said Nelle J. Hershey; that the said Nelle J. Hershey had no brother or brothers, sister or sisters whatsoever; that the grandparents of said Nelle J. Hershey pre-deceased her; that the said Nelle J. Hershey had no uncle or uncles, aunt or aunts; that the said Nelle J. Hershey had no cousin or cousins.
>
> And that said Nelle J. Hershey died leaving R. G. Hershey as her husband and leaving no other person or persons whatsoever as her heir at law.

Roy G. Hershey inherited the house at 314 E. Madison and continued to live in the home after his wife died in 1944.

1950 U.S. Census

In this Census, Roy G. Hershey was 67 years old and was a minister in the clergy. He lived at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac.

Also living in the household was Jerry L. Maxwell, 19 years of age. Jerry reported that he was born in Illinois.

Gerald Laurence Maxwell Graduated with the Class of 1950 at Pontiac High School

The Pantagraph published photos of all the graduates in 1950 at Pontiac on May 17, 1950. A copy of the photo published for Gerald Maxwell is shown below.

June 1950 Photos of Jerry Maxwell and the Jones House

Pearle Sutherland put four photos of Jerry Maxwell in her Livingston County Historical Society scrapbook. On the back of the photos, it is handwritten "June 1950, Jerry Maxwell, shows old porch on house."

Unfortunately, the women in the photograph are not identified. Since it is dated June 1950, this was likely a celebration for Jerry Maxwell graduating from Pontiac High School. The oldest woman appears to be Jerry's grandmother, Edith Amelia Anderson – Hartman (1890-1977) because her image is very similar to photographs of her on Ancestry.com. It is possible the second oldest woman is Jerry's mother Dorothy Viola Hartman – Maxwell (1907-1985).

It is likely that Pearle Sutherland saved these photographs in her scrapbook because it shows the north side and north porch of the Jones House. Copies of these photos are shown below to illustrate the condition of the front porch in 1950.

Biography of Gerald Lawrence Maxwell

The following biography for Jerry Maxwell was created from data on Ancestry.com and his 1984 obituary in an Iowa newspaper.

The mother of Gerald Lawrence Maxwell was Dorothy Viola Hartman. She was born in 1907 in Burlington, Iowa. When she was 11 years old, her father, Fred Hartman (1888-1918) died.

At the age of 17, Dorothy Hartman married Harry Franklin Maxwell in Burlington, Iowa. Harry Maxwell was 19 years of age when he married Dorothy. Son William Franklin Maxwell (1926-2006) was born in 1926, son Robert Charles Maxwell (1928-2005) was born in 1928, and son Gerald Lawrence Maxwell (1931-1984) was born in 1931.

Unfortunately, Harry Maxwell got suddenly ill in Burlington and had an emergency operation in 1935 when he was just 29 years of age. He recovered from the initial surgery, but died on October 21, 1935. Harry Maxwell was buried in Burlington Memorial Park in Burlington, Iowa.

Gerald L. Maxwell was four years old when his father died. Mrs. Harry Maxwell was left a widow with three young boys to raise.

The year after her husband died, in 1936, Dorothy Hartman married John A. Levaggi in Cook County, Illinois. Dorothy was 28 and John Levaggi was 40 years of age when they married. Gerald Maxwell was five years of age when his mother remarried.

Dorothy's second marriage only lasted two years. In 1938, she married William Kuster in Burlington, Iowa. When she married for the third time, Dorothy was 31 and William Kuster was 49 years of age. Gerald Maxwell was seven years old when his mother married for the third time.

In the 1940 U.S. Census, Dorothy was living with John A. Levaggi in Dubuque, Iowa. Her two sons, William F. and Robert C. Maxwell changed their last names from Maxwell to Levaggi. Nine year old Gerald Maxwell was not listed as living in this household. Gerald Maxwell could not be found in the 1940 Census.

When the 1950 U.S. Census was taken, Gerald Maxwell was 19 years of age. This Census listed Gerald as living with 67 year old minister Roy G. Hershey at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac. In this Census, Mr. Maxwell was listed as Jerry L. Maxwell, age 19, with no occupation.

A May 17, 1950, Pantagraph article listed Gerald Maxwell graduating with the Class of 1950 at Pontiac Township High School.

Roy G. Hershey died in 1955. The will of Roy G. Hershey stated that Gerald Maxwell was in the military service and that he should inherit the house at 314 E. Madison Street in Pontiac. Gerald Maxwell inherited the house at 314 E. Madison Street.

Gerald Maxwell apparently got married sometime between 1950 when he lived with Roy Hershey and when the probate process finished in 1957 because Gerald and Ruth K. Maxwell sold the house. This transaction is recorded in the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract.

In 1957, Dorothy Hartman married for the fourth time. She married Sidney A. Floyd (1906-2003) in Monmouth, Illinois. Dorothy was 49 and Sidney was 51 when they married.

By the time Gerald Maxwell died in Burlington, Iowa, he had apparently had a son and then got divorced. In the May 22, 1984 obituary for Gerald Maxwell that was published in a Burlington, Iowa, newspaper, no mention of his wife was made. The obituary did mention that he had a son, Lt. Brent Maxwell, in the Indiana Air Guard. Gerald Maxwell was buried in the Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington, Iowa. In this obituary, both brothers of Gerald Maxwell had changed their last names back to Maxwell.

About one year after Gerald Maxwell died, his mother, Dorothy Hartman, died at the age of 76 in Iowa City, Iowa. She was buried in Aspen Grove Cemetery in Burlington, Iowa. The name on her gravestone is Dorothy Floyd.

Obituary for Gerald Maxwell

The obituary for Gerald Maxwell was published on May 22, 1984, in a Burlington, Iowa, newspaper and it is shown below.

May 22, 1984
Burlington, Iowa, newspaper

Death Notices

Gerald Lawrence Maxwell

Gerald Lawrence Maxwell, 53, Summer Street Road, died in Veterans Hospital, Iowa City, Saturday, May 19.

He was born in Chicago Jan. 12, 1931, to Harry and Dorothy Hartman Maxwell. He served in the Air Force in the Korean conflict.

Mr. Maxwell was a maintenance man at the Iowa Army Ammunition Plant. He was a member of First Assembly of God Church.

Surviving: Son Lt. Brent, Indiana Air Guard; his stepfather and mother, Sidney and Dorothy Floyd, Burlington; two brothers, William Maxwell, Hot Springs, Ark., and Robert Maxwell, Lemont, Ill.; and two stepbrothers, John Floyd, Panguitch, Utah, and Sidney Floyd Jr., West Burlington.

Funeral: 10 a.m. Wednesday in Prugh's Chapel, the Rev. Russell Schirman; Aspen Grove Cemetery. A memorial has been established for First Assembly of God Church.

Reverend Roy G. Hershey Dies in 1955

His obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

June 25, 1955
Pantagraph

R. G. Hershey, Pontiac Minister, Dies at 72

PONTIAC —(PNS)— The Rev. R. G. Hershey, 72, active in Pontiac religious and civic affairs since 1938, died at 2:30 a. m. Friday at Brokaw Hospital, Normal.

His funeral will be at 1:30 p. m. Sunday at the Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home. Interment will be in Abbey Mausoleum. The Rev. Rudolph Loidolt of the First Baptist Church of Bloomington will officiate.

Visitation will begin at 1 p. m. Saturday at the funeral home.

Mr. Hershey was born Sept. 29, 1882, at Osage City, Kan., son of Frank Milton and Francis Watkins Hershey. He attended the Moody Bible Institute and did special work at McCormick Seminary.

He married Miss Nell Jones Nov. 1, 1910, in Pontiac. She died May 26, 1944.

At the time of his death, Mr. Hershey was pastor of Cornell Baptist Church, although he still maintained his residence in Pontiac.

He came here in 1938 as secretary-manager of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce. He served in that post until 1944. He resumed his church work as pastor of the First Baptist Church of Pontiac, serving for nine years. He was pastor of the Cornell church for four years.

Mr. Hershey was ordained a minister in the Presbyterian Church in Detroit in January, 1910, by the Presbytery of Detroit. He was received into the Baptist Fellowship in October, 1944. He held pastorates in Michigan, Ohio, Alabama, Georgia and Missouri.

He was a member of the International Committee on Child Welfare, director of the Birmingham, Ala., Boys' Club; Founding director of the Alabama Assn., of the Blind; member of the Illinois Aid-to Dependent Children Commission: president of the Birmingham Civic Assn.; secretary - manager of the Kansas City, Mo., Improvement Assn.; first president of the Birmingham Lions Club; defense director of Livingston County during

World War II; member of the Ohio Finance Committee during World War I and a veteran of Co. C, 16th Inf., during the Spanish American War.

Survivors include a sister, Mrs. Jessie Snedigar of Kansas City, Mo. He was preceded in death by two brothers and a sister.

Probate Process for Roy G. Hershey Started a Few Days After His Death in 1955

According to the the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, Executor Francis E. Lehman filed paperwork to start the probate process on June 27, 1955. Mr. Lehman stated that he knew Roy G. Hershey very well and was a personal friend of his.

Roy Hershey had a will, and a copy of the will is in the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract. In this will, Roy Hershey left the house at 314 E. Madison Street and his personal effects to Gerald Lawrence Maxwell. As a contingency measure, the will stated that if Gerald Maxwell died before Roy Hershey died, the house and personal effects should go to his sister, Jessie Hershey – Snedigar in Iowa. The will stated that Gerald Maxwell was in the military and was serving in Okinawa.

The will also stated that Roy G. Hershey had an extensive library due to his work as a minister. Roy designated that this library should be given to a ministerial student or a minister per the executor's judgment.

The will specified the remainder of his estate be equally split between Gerald Maxwell, his sister Jessie Snedigar, and the First Baptist Church of Pontiac.

After about two years in the probate process, the house at 314 E. Madison legally passed to Gerald Maxwell. The probate process did not conclude until October of 1957.

As soon as the probate process was concluded, Gerald Lawrence Maxwell and his wife Ruth K. Maxwell sold the house to John H. and Naomi M. Koehler on November 13, 1957.

Mr. and Mrs. Koehler took out a $7,000 mortgage from the Fairbury Federal Savings & Loan Association at a 6% interest rate. J. A. Patterson was President and Carl Borngasser was Secretary of the Savings & Loan.

Francis E. Lehman Featured in 1971 New York Times Story about Pontiac, Illinois

A copy of this story is shown below.

> The New York Times
> June 13, 1971
> Section F, Page 3
>
> PONTIAC, Ill.—"My dad said this psychology to me," Frank Lehman said the other day, smiling from behind the counter of his men's store here, "that he'd rather have a peanut machine on the corner and have it be long to him than have the best job in America."
>
> That is what Main Street was built on. That is the rock it clings to, whatever tides of change wash across the country.
>
> For half a century, Main Street has stood as a symbol of self-satisfied provincialism and narrow boosterism. For half a century, since the days when the "war to end wars" was a proud and recent truth, that symbol has been accepted as the substance of small-town America, its merchants, housewives, doctors and philosophers.
>
> Now Washington speaks more modestly of "a generation of peace"—if and when. Men have walked the moon and their footfalls have left marks on Main Street. Much has changed. But much has not.
>
> Main Street's merchants are still often one with its philosophers.
>
> Frank Lehman, for instance.
>
> His allegiance to the Republican party, the Presbyterian Church, the Rotary Club, the Kiwanis Club, the Elks, the Moose, the Masons, the Chamber of Commerce and even Pontiac itself has not sufficed to keep Frank Lehman from asking himself some disturbing questions about the times in which he lives—about the Vietnam war, ecological problems, the righteousness of denominational religion, the growing skepticism of the young.
>
> But there are some verities. And for him, as for thousands of Frank Lehmans, his father's words are among them.
>
> Frank Lehman is 60 years old now, medium in height, somewhat thick through the waist, a little heavy in the jowls. And except for nine months at a business college in Kankakee ("I decided right then that I didn't care much for cities."), he has been on the square in Pontiac since he took a job at 13 as delivery boy for a department store.

For 47 years, he has been a part of Main Street. More precisely, for most of that time, North Mill Street, on the best side of the square."

Francis E. Lehman. That's the way it's written on the dashboard name plate of his 1964 Lincoln Continental. ("They'd have a hard time telling me that they ever built a better car than this Continental. But don't say that I ever said anything about the Cadillacs. The dealer's a customer of mine, too. I could get in a lot of trouble.")

But in Pontiac, it's mostly just "Frank."

Easing out the door of Lehman's Men's Store, he dropped a half-dozen first name "good mornings" before he'd gone 20 feet along the sidewalk. Pausing, but not neglecting to smile and nod at the passers-by, he happily surveyed the busy square that surrounds the massive old brick courthouse adorned with white columns and pigeon-plagued towers.

"You see that new front on Penney's — that's in the last year," he said, squinting into the sun and pointing, "and that front on the furniture store — that's in the last year."

And on, around the square, cataloging, boosting, some times mildly apologizing before hastily prophesying a future improvement. The words flowing in torrents as they always do when he talks of Pontiac. Excited, discovering again — as he had done almost every day of his life — the small wonders, the bright promise of his city of 9,000 enterprising mid-Americans.

Pontiac, 100 miles south west of Chicago on Interstate 55 and old Route 66, is a checkerboard of weathered frame houses and well-kept modern dwellings, split by the muddy meanderings of the Vermilion River, a springtime menace in these flatlands.

At the heart of a good farming area, the shopping center and seat of rural Livingston County, Pontiac has seen its once-thriving shoe industry dwindle to one small factory manufacturing heels.

But in the last few years a campaign to attract a more diversified set of employers, aided in part, of course, by Frank Lehman, has been successful. Now the city has more than a dozen small-to medium-sized plants, including Motorola and Interlake Steel, whose low, sprawling buildings on the edge of town are recent intruders among the corn fields.

A town of about 3,000 at the turn of the century, Pontiac has prospered, in its fashion, growing slowly and steadily. Houses worth $50,000 to $85,000

grace the new subdivisions, some of them developed, of course, by Frank Lehman, around the nine-hole golf course.

But Pontiac's success has not been undiluted.

“I'm going to show you a bad thing here in town, Frank Lehman said, lighting another Pall Mall filter and maneuvering the Lincoln among the side street pot holes until he came to Winston Churchill College. The two-year institution, which has 127 students and occupies a former high school building, was started five years ago by the community.

“Another fellow and I assumed the responsibility of raising $80,000 for the community college,” he explained, “and we raised $147,000. I was on the board for a year, then I left. Later I went back on and helped raise another $60,000 for them.”

Now the college, in financial difficulty again, must shut down at the end of this semester.

Frank Lehman may have gone to work as a delivery boy at 13, but it wasn't long before he was a salesman in the store's shoe department. Then, after his business school training at Kankakee, he set his sights higher.

“I went into this one clothing store to apply for a job,” he recalled, “and this old German ran it. He said, ‘if you came here looking for a job, it doesn't pay enough. If you came here to learn a business, it will be worth your while.’

“I asked him how long it would take. He said, ‘Ten years.’ He said, ‘If you don't stay 10 years, the mistakes you make will be more than you can afford to pay.’ And he was right.

“I worked for him eight and a half years. Then I worked three years for his competitor. He had a little more showmanship. I wanted to find out what he had.”

Frank Lehman found out. And in 1939 he opened his own store on the square in a building bought by his father, a farmer turned realtor.

Some things have changed in 32 years at Lehman's Men's Store. The old maximum inventory of about $26,000 has risen to $125,000. Overalls and work clothes are pretty much out, except for three low stacks of Levis stuck away behind a counter. Long underwear is almost a thing of the past, but a small supply is laid in for the traditionalists. White shirts have to be asked for, while the shelves are choked with vivid colors. Wide ties are the only ones displayed.

But Frank Lehman and his salesmen still work in their shirtsleeves and willingly model clothes for customers, especially the increasing majority of women who buy for their husbands. His three tailors still sew on lost buttons, mend rips and alter clothes for customers who have dieted or gained weight —all at no cost. And he still has a deal with some friends around town that they can return a suit if they don't get a compliment the first day they wear it.

Frank Lehman, in business, has lived by certain accepted truths:

“Every store has a personality and we try to have a pleasing one.”

“People want to see you in the store. They want you to know they've bought a suit there. I feel the same way when I go somewhere in town. I've instructed my salesmen to keep track of who buys a suit and tell me if I'm not there, so I can thank the fellow the next time I see him on the street.”

“There's no reason in the world why we should let anyone go out of here with anything that doesn't look good on him.

“My dad told me when went into business, ‘You'll be doing, a lot of business with farmers. Just as soon as you get some money ahead, you buy a farm.’ So I did. I think I became more sympathetic toward them after I got involved.”

The last of these truths also led to the passion of his later years, experimental farming. For seven or right years now he has concentrated on organic farming on his 90 acres.

His farm trade has also led him into one of his few conflicts with his fellow merchants. Pontiac is one of the rare towns in the nation that has clung to Saturday night shopping hours and there has been talk of changing to Friday.

“I guess I've kind of stood in the way,” Frank Lehman said modestly, although another man involved said that last year the clothier somehow had single-handedly managed to get a vote for the change reversed. “We get business from 40 miles around. I haven't got any way to get the word out to those farmers if we were going to close Saturday and that's the only day they have off. If they come in just once and I'm closed, that's it.”

Business is still business on Main Street. But there are other truths.

“You've got a lot of memories that make life worthwhile, if you can kind of remember that other people need help, too,” Frank Lehman mused as he

shared a nightcap of ice cream and butterscotch sauce with his wife, Ferne, in the kitchen of their comfortable and well furnished but unpretentious ranch house, which is on 30 acres overlooking the golf course. (He will take a drink or two, outside of business hours, but he doesn't keep liquor in his home.)

“You've got to be involved in life,” he went on; “that's what makes it interesting— and it's good for business, too.”

Frank Lehman has been involved.

For 16 years, until the Salk vaccine diminished the need, he ran the county polio fund drive. He has been active for 21 years on the board of St. James Hospital and not long ago headed a campaign that raised $222,000 for a new wing. He used to serve on the county tuberculosis board and is a member of the welfare board. He is a treasurer of the rural fire department, a past president of the Chamber of Commerce and a founder and past chairman of the board of the Bank of Pontiac.

Frank Lehman has done a lot. But that, too, is what it means to be on Main Street.

“Pontiac, like any small community,” said John Verona, the young executive vice president of the Chamber of Commerce, “has taken people like Frank and worked them to death. The small businessman has made this community what it is— all of these Midwest communities. Every town has its leaders.”

But Frank Lehman hasn't minded.

“I've thoroughly enjoyed life and everything I've done in this community,” he said, relaxing on the long sofa in his living room as his son, John, 24, and his wife and infant daughter prepared to leave after an evening visit. “I only wish I was 20 now— everything is traveling at such a fast pace it's hard to keep up with it.”

In Pontiac, he has kept up. But it's been almost a full time job. Other than spending what time he can steal from his business and community affairs with his family or working on his farm or reading biographies (Lincoln is his favorite), recreation and socializing are not high on his list of priorities.

He's not a club man (“I haven't hardly been in the Elks Club for two years,”), although he's a joiner.

“I don't run in any social circles in particular,” he explained. “I like to be able to be friends to all of them when you have to get something done. I'd rather spend my spare time working on community projects.”

And over nearly half a century, Frank Lehman's love affair with Pontiac has not been severely tested. He has never taken a real vacation, never even exposed himself to the possible lures of New York or San Francisco or Florida or Arizona, let alone Europe or Asia.

“If I got in one of those places and I didn't know anybody,” he explained earnestly, “I couldn't operate like that.”

“Besides, I'm not willing to come back and try to catch up with what's gone on while I'm gone. Every day is an interesting day to me and I don't want to miss any thing.”

“And, of course, we're close to Chicago and Peoria and places like that. It isn't as if we were off someplace.”

Frank Lehman is not way off some place. Frank Lehman is still on Main Street.

CHAPTER 8

The 1972 to 1975 Period with Jones House Fire

Mrs. Koehler Died in 1972

The obituary for her in the Pantagraph is shown below.

> October 12, 1972
> Pantagraph
>
> **Mrs. Naomi Koehler**
>
> PONTIAC — Mrs. Naomi M. Koehler, 66, of Westmont, formerly of Pontiac, died at 3 p.m. Wednesday at St. James Hospital in Pontiac.
>
> She had been ill for six weeks.
>
> Her funeral will be at 11 a.m. Saturday.

According to the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, her estate entered the probate process on October 24, 1972. Naomi Koehler had a will dated June 29, 1957. Ownership of the house at 314 E. Madison Street remained with Mr. Koehler after his wife died.

Major Fire at the Jones House in 1975

The application for the Jones House to be added to the National Register of Historic Places recounts the Jones House experienced a major fire in 1975.

> After Jones' death, the house passed to members of his family and in more recent years was converted into apartments by adding several wood frame additions. The house was damaged by fire in 1975 and slated for demolition. However, the Livingston County Historical Society purchased the property in 1976 and is implementing plans to restore it as a county museum.

The application also has a photo showing the south kitchen room was completely burned down in the fire. This photo is shown later in the section about the specifics of the application.

No article in the Pontiac Daily Leader could be found about this fire.

The September 27, 1984 issue of the Update Historical Society newsletter reported the fire occurred on September 12, 1975.

CHAPTER 9

The 1976 to 1980 House Restoration Period

House Sold to Francis E. Lehman and Reid Tombaugh in 1976

According to the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, the house was sold on April 21, 1976 to Mr. Lehman and Mr. Tombaugh. Mr. Koehler had apparently married again after his first wife died, because the house was sold by John H. Koehler and wife Bernice Koehler to Francis E. Lehman and Reid Tombaugh. No sales amount was given.

Note that Francis E. Lehman had been the Executor of the estate of Roy G. Hershey when Mr. Hershey died in 1955.

Circa 1976 Photo of John Perring

A photo of John Perring was found in the History Society scrapbook prepared by Pearle Sutherland. This photo is shown below.

Circa 1976 Photo of Reid Tombaugh

A photo of Reid Tombaugh was found in the History Society scrapbook prepared by Pearle Sutherland. This photo is shown below.

Mr. Lehman Died Before the House was Transferred to the Historical Society

Unfortunately, Francis E. Lehman died on December 30, 1976, just eight months after he and Mr. Tombaugh bought the house. Mr. Lehman had a will dated May 1, 1975. His obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

December 31, 1976
Pantagraph

Mr. Lehman, Pontiac civic leader, dies at 66

PONTIAC PNS)—Francis E. "Frank" Lehman, 66, a prominent business and civic leader once featured in the Sunday New York Times, died at 10:15 a.m. Thursday at his home of an apparent heart attack.

The Times, calling him "A Man From Main Street," detailed his beginnings on the town square as a delivery boy at 13 to opening his own store, Lehman's Men's Store, in 1939.

"My dad said this psychology to me," Mr. Lehman told the Times in 1971, "that he'd rather have a peanut machine on the corner and have it belong to him than have the worst job in America."

He was involved in his community leaving Pontiac only long enough to attend Gallagher Business College, Kankakee, for nine months before returning.

For 16 years, he ran the county polio drive. He was active on the board of St. James Hospital and headed a campaign that raised $222,000 for a new wing.

He was a treasurer for the rural fire department, and served on the county tuberculosis board.

He was a founder and past chairman of the board of the Bank of Pontiac and is a past president of the Chamber of Commerce.

He and another man raised $147,000 for the now-defunct Winston Churchill College. The original goal had been $80,000. Later, when the college was financially ailing, he went back and raised another $60,000. The junior college shut down in 1971.

He also did organic farming on 90 acres for a number of years.

> He was associated with the Pontiac Development Co. and was on the Livingston County Housing Authority Board of Commissioners.
>
> He was a member of and taught Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church, to which memorials may be made.
>
> His funeral will be at 1:30 p.m Monday at the First Presbyterian Church, the Rev. Kenneth Dobson officiating. Burial will be in South Side Cemetery.
>
> Visitation will be from 4 to 8 p.m. Sunday at the Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home.

The estate of Francis E. Lehman entered the probate process on January 5, 1977, per the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract. Ferne Lehman, his wife, was Executor of the estate. His will specified that his wife inherited his interest in the business known as Lehman's Men Store in Pontiac.

House Ownership Transferred to the Historical Society in 1977

Per the 1905-1977 Jones House partial abstract, two transactions were completed on June 3, 1977. In the first transaction, Ferne Lehman, widow of Francis E. Lehman, sold her husband's half-interest in the house to the Livingston County Historical Society. In the second transaction, Reid R. Tombaugh sold his half-interest in the house to the Historical Society.

Jones House Article in the Daily Leader Start in 1977

In 1977, twelve different articles were published about the Livingston County Historical Society refurbishing the Jones House in Pontiac. The first of these articles is shown below.

May 13, 1977
Daily Leader

Dialectics hear Bushnell on "Recovering the Past"

Mrs. Pearre presented Dr. Paul Bushnell, professor of history in American Studies at Illinois Wesleyan University, who presented the program entitled "Recovering the Past."

The second part of Dr. Bushnell's program involved his interest in the town of Pontiac which is similar to the town in which he grew up in Ohio. Dr Bushnell has assisted the Livingston County Historical Society in planning the restoration of the "Jones House" on Madison Street.

This house is an excellent example of Gothic Revival architecture with its three gables and its arched upstairs windows. At the rear is a partial window which seems to indicate that the present house was attached to an older wooden structure.

In determining the age of the house, Dr. Bushnell learned from old tax records that the property was valued at $300 in 1857 and at $800 the next year. These facts indicate that during 1857 or early 1858 the brick structure was built.

Additional research must be done in order to accomplish an authentic restoration. Dr. Bushnell urged the preservation of all old glass plate pictures of Pontiac as these old pictures will help develop the flavor of old Pontiac homes: the apartment house on West Howard Street which is the oldest brick house; the Tallman house on West Livingston which is another excellent example of Gothic Revival; and the Deterding home on N. Main street which feature excellent dentil and scroll work.

The business meeting was conducted by Mrs. C. David Vogel, president. Mrs. Don Moore poured at the tea table.

Garden Walk Benefit to Support Refurbishment of the Jones House

In the July 5, 1977 issue of the Daily Leader, Thelma Asper and Blossom Lowenthal placed an ad for a garden walk to benefit the restoration of the Jones House.

Jones House Restoration Discussed at Livingston County Historical Society Meeting

In September of 1977, the Leader published a story about a recent Historical Society meeting.

September 26, 1977
Daily Leader

“Old Houses in Pontiac” topic for Historical Society

A program on "Old Houses in Pontiac" was presented by Miss Erma Hesterberg at a meeting of the Livingston County Historical Society Thursday night at the Pontiac Public Library.

Miss Hesterberg, an instructor at Pontiac Township High School, showed slides of homes throughout Pontiac and commented on their architectural derivation.

Also shown were some slides of the Jones House at 314 E. Madison St. which is to be restored for a county museum.

Reid Tombaugh, president of the society, conducted a business meeting preceding the program. John Lehman reported for his wife that the garden walk sponsored by the Junior Woman's Club to benefit the county museum had raised $576. The club also plans to hold a rummage sale to benefit the Jones house.

John Perring, chairman of the restoration committee, reported that "lots of things have been happening, even though to look at the house it might not seem so”.

A presentation on the society's application to have the Jones House recognized as a national historic site was made Sept. 17 before the State Preservation Committee of 15 people. Peering said that by unanimous decision the house was nominated as a national historic site and is the first site in Livingston County so recognized. He said that the application will now be forwarded to Washington, D.C. The state recognition makes the museum eligible for a grant, which is being sought.

While a formal fund drive is not yet underway, a number of contributions already have been made, he reported.

William Cooney, Macomb, who has had considerable experience in restoring old buildings, including the old state capital at Vandalia, has been retained as an architect to assist in the restoration, Perring said. The

first drawings have been made and Cooney is working on restoration plans.

Tombaugh asked for volunteers to pull weeds around the foundation of the house.

Committees for the society were announced by Tombaugh. They are: program, Mrs. Lucile Goodrich, Fairbury; J. Paul Yost and Mrs. Marcia Weber, Pontiac; Mrs. Margaretha Meyer, Strawn, and Henry Phillips, Fairbury; publicity, Mrs, Elizabeth Harris and Mrs. Dorothea Green, Pontiac; restoration, John Forcing, J. M. Luther, Mrs. Lynn Lehman, Harold Byrne and Mrs. Arnold Peterson, Pontiac, and Roger Wessels, Fairbury; membership, John Lehman and Mrs, Lois Szilagyi, Pontiac, and Miss Mabel Marlar, Strawn; refreshment, Mrs. Jean Luther and Mrs. Evelyn Armbruster, Pontiac.

Refreshments were served following the program by Mrs. Fern Lehman and Mrs. Pearl Sutherland.

Pontiac Social Clubs Help on Jones House Restoration

The Leader published the following article in October of 1977.

October 1, 1977
Daily Leader

Pontiac Junior Woman's Club makes plans for new year

Civic improvement project co-chairmen Mrs. John Lehman and Mrs. Michael Silagyi reported that a work day would be held Oct. 9 at the Jones House. Vice-president Mrs. Michael Cochran explained the procedure for sign-up sheets to the club.

Guest Editorial about the Jones House Restoration in the Daily Leader

The Leader published this guest editorial in October of 1977.

Guest Editorial - Jones House Restoration

The Daily Leader

October 11, 1977

By JOHN PERRING

I am appreciative of the invitation by The Daily Leader to write a guest editorial. This opportunity allows me to write about the Jones house restoration program now underway by the Livingston County Historical Society.

The Jones house is located at 314 East Madison Street, The opportunity to acquire the Jones home was made possible through the efforts of Reid Tombaugh, the late Francis Lehman and the Humiston Trust.

This unique pre-Civil War home, second oldest brick residence in Pontiac, is an excellent example of Classic Gothic Revival type architecture. This style of architecture was developed by Andrew Jackson Downing and was very popular between 1850 and 1870.

Downing, also famous for landscaping, published a book in 1842, "Cottage Residences," that contained floor plans along with complete instructions for building them. He favored the "English Rural Gothic" pointed style that was picturesque with its irregular roof shapes and asymmetrical design.

It is the objective of the Historical Society to restore this fine old home to its original charm and beauty, Architectural plans are currently being prepared by William B. Coney, AIA architect of Macomb. Mr. Coney is a recognized authority in the restoration of old and significant architectural homes and public buildings.

On Saturday, Sept. 17, the State Historic Preservation Committee nominated the Jones house to the National Register of Historic Places. This is a great achievement for the Historical Society and the first home in the county to be so recognized.

Vandalism at the Jones House

The risk of vandalism is always present when a house is in the restoration process. Vandalism at the Jones House prompted the Historical Society to place this ad in the Leader on October 14, 1977.

$100 REWARD
for the apprehension and conviction of person or persons responsible for the vandalism of the Jones House, 314 E. Madison, Pontiac
Livingston County
Historical Society
Pontiac, Illinois

Woman's Club Donates to Jones House Restoration Project

The Leader published a story and photograph about the Pontiac Woman's Club donating for the restoration of the Jones House.

October 28, 1977
Daily Leader

WOMAN'S CLUB DONATES TO FUTURE MUSEUM — Mrs. Ray Beck, left, president of the Pontiac Woman's Club, presented a check for $1,000 to John Perring, restoration chairman of the Livingston County Historical Society, yesterday. The money will be used toward the restoration of the Jones House, the future county museum.

The Jones House is the project of the club's community improvement program headed by Mrs. Duncan Funk, center. Funds donated were accumulated from several different projects of the woman's club.

Talk Given to Kiwanis Club About Jones House Restoration in 1977

John Lehman spoke to the Kiwanis Club about the Jones House restoration project per the Daily Leader article shown below.

November 5, 1977
Daily Leader

Kiwanis hear Lehman on Jones House

The Jones House, 314 E. Madison St., has been recognized by the state as an official historical site, John Lehman told Pontiac Kiwanis members Wednesday. This acceptance makes the project eligible to receive federal money for restoring the house to its original state during the 1850's, he said. Lehman said the restoration cost is estimated at $60,000 to $70,000 and half of the sum must be raised locally to qualify for the federal aid.

Lehman told the Kiwanis "it took a lot of research to establish proof that the house was built in the 1850's." He explained that the pre-Civil War assessment records at the courthouse were very helpful, and he complimented Arnold Natzke for his assistance.

Lehman said that when a historical preservation expert checked the house he verified the age by analyzing the wall plaster which contained horsehair.

Research established the fact that John Dehner was the first owner of the Jones House, Lehman said. Dehner was a prominent businessman and president of the Pontiac Town Council.

Lehman commented that more than $22,000 already has been raised even though no organized fund drive has been held, He said an architect has been hired to prepare historically accurate plans for the restoration which is expected to take three to five years. The house will house the Livingston County Historical Society museum and be open to the public.

George Potter introduced Lehman. Guests attending were William Schweizer, Cornell; Philip Ribbe, Kankakee; Chris Reno, Pontiac.

Jones House Restoration Project Receives Monetary Donation

The Leader published this photo and caption on November 7, 1977.

JONES HOUSE RECEIVES GIFT — John Perring, right, restoration chairman of the Livingston County Historical Society, accepts a gift to the society from Mrs. Pearl Sutherland. The $1,150 check will be used for the restoration of the Jones House at 314 E. Madison St. which will become the county museum. The house was nominated by the state of Illinois to be considered as a national historic site. The application was forwarded to Washington, D.C., where it is presently being considered.

A 1978 Donation to the Jones House Refurbishment Project

The Pantagraph published the following story.

> The Pantagraph
> May 1, 1978
>
> **Renovation Project Gets $125 Donation**
>
> PONTIAC — Participants in a recent Downtown Retail Association flea market have donated $125 to the Livingston County Historical Society.
>
> The donations will be used to help restore the society's Jones House, which was built in 1858. Restoration projects are scheduled to begin in the spring, said John Perring, house restoration chairman.
>
> More than $20,000 has been raised toward the estimated $60,000 cost of restoration.

Jones House Approved to be Added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1978

John Lehman & John Perring, as representatives of the Livingston County Historical Society, initially submitted this application on April 22, 1977.

Prior to the Historical Society, the Jones House had experienced a major fire. Two photographs of the house included with the application indicate the home was badly damaged by the fire.

Front view of the Jones House before restoration from the application to add the house to the National Register of Historic Places.

Rear view of the Jones House before restoration from the application to add the house to the National Register of Historic Places.

Key parts of the application to add the Jones House to the National Register are shown below.

DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Jones House is a pre-Civil War, Gothic Revival style, two-story brick residence.

ORIGINAL EXTERIOR:

The house is constructed with 8" thick brick bearing walls on a foundation of limestone rubble and brick. The original house also included a wood frame structure attached to the back which pre-dated the house itself. The present porch is anachronistic. The house had a somewhat ornate porch, the outline of which can clearly be seen in paint markings on the brick of the front wall. Other indications of the extent and style of the porch are flashing outlines at juncture of roof and front wall, the remains of brick foundations which supported the front extension.

The front elevation displays a five-bay, symmetrical format which is more often found in previous styles. The gable roof presents the same symmetricality of the first floor but departs from it in that there are three equal gables containing Gothic windows (casements). Chimneys were present on the original building at the center of the East and West gable ends. Research indicates that original framing members and wood decking are extant and in good condition in the roof. Some original flashing remains under three layers of shingles but all exterior roof trim and soffits are replacements. Indications of original roofing material may be found upon removal of existing layers.

The front entrance door with two sidelights and transom is original and the sidelights display finely worked wood embellishments typical of the Gothic. These; as well as the outlines of the porch mentioned above, would indicate that the house originally had fully developed Gothic detailing at gables and the front porch itself. Further research on the original fabric of the structure (and into local historic documents) will provide the necessary proofs for the accuracy of the restoration. It is expected that the shape of original chimneys may be indicated upon removal of existing anachronistic chimneys and roofing.

The West elevation is intact in its original condition and all masonry is in good condition. The East elevation displays a second floor window which has been bricked in. Removal of paint will reveal whether this is original construction or a later addition. A coal chute to the basement is later. Unlike the front elevation, the rear contains several doors which are

actually enlargement of window openings which will be rebuilt to original condition.

EXISTING INTERIOR:

Interior rooms display the usual accumulation of cosmetic treatments of the prior 120 years including acoustical tile, wallpapers, flooring, closets, etc. Underneath, the original plaster ceilings and walls are intact but in need of repair. Original pine floorboards are extant as is most base and window and door trim. Most doors are original and have original hardware. The Original stairs and handrail are in place although somewhat altered. The mantel and it's trim at the East room are original. The fireplace at the West room may contain an original cast-iron stove (built-in). Further research will be done to determine if this is the case. The West room of the first floor sustained a minor fire in 1975 but no major damage occurred.

The second floor contains a center stair hall, front to back in the center of the building, a large bedroom with fireplace and mantel (original) on the East and a smaller bedroom on the West which has an eight foot wide dressing room or child's bedroom on the South. This room has been remodeled for a bath which will be removed.

Windows on both floors are original and have original trim moldings, aprons and stools.

With further research into finishes (paint, varnish, wallpaper, etc.) enough original fabric remains in the interior of the house to restore it very accurately to it's 1858 condition. The Livingston County Historical Society has retained a restoration architect and is proceeding with this work.

STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Jones House is architecturally important. because it is locally unique. It is one of the few pre-Civil War Gothic Revival residences which survive within Livingston County, and the second oldest brick house in Pontiac.

The house is also important because it was the residence of two important Pontiac businessmen, first John Dehner, and later Henry C. Jones.

The property on which the house is located was sold to John Dehner in October 1857. The house was finished on the lot in 1858. Dehner was a prominent Pontiac businessman in the late nineteenth century. In 1865 he was partner with other Livingston county residents in the creation of the Chicago and Paducah Railroad. He also formed a partnership (1866) with

> other Pontiac citizens to begin the first coal mining operation in the Pontiac vicinity. He built the first brick commercial building in down-town Pontiac.
>
> Henry C. Jones purchased the property in 1899 and lived in the house until 1921. He founded the Free Press in 1865. Later he also purchased the only other newspaper, The Sentinel. He also developed the Pontiac Light, Heat, and Power in the 1890s. He served as its president for many years afterward.
>
> After Jones' death, the house passed to members of his family and in more recent years was converted into apartments by adding several wood frame additions. The house was damaged by fire in 1975 and slated for demolition. However, the Livingston County Historical Society purchased the property in 1976 and is implementing plans to restore it as a county museum.

Some reviewers of the application expressed concerns about how badly the house was damaged and being able to restore it properly. Despite these concerns, the Jones House was approved to be added to the National Register of Historic Places on May 5, 1978.

In the National Register system, the Jones House is property #78001163. A copy of the original application can be viewed or downloaded at https://tinyurl.com/29zz5bdw.

Jones House Accepted for Addition to the National Register of Historic Places

The June 3, 1978 Daily Leader published the following story about the Jones House being accepted for the National Register.

Good News for the Historical Society - John Perring, right, and John Lehman, read and discussed a letter naming Pontiac's Jones House to the National Register in Washington D.C. The house at 314 E. Madison St., purchased by the Livingston County Historical Society in 1976, will be restored and used as a county museum. Perring is restoration committee chairman. Lehman, a member of the committee, has made the grant-in-aid application for restoration funds.

National Register of Historic Places accepts Jones House

The Jones House, 314 E. Madison St. a restoration project of the Livingston County Historical Society since 1976, was officially accepted in the National Register of Historic Places on May 5. It becomes the first structure in Livingston County ever nominated or accepted in the register. John Perring, chairman of the restoration committee of the historical society, received word yesterday of the acceptance of the 119-year-old house in the register in a letter from the Illinois Department of Conservation.

The process began a year ago in April when the application for the nomination of the house was submitted to the Illinois Department of Conservation. In September 1977 the house was recognized by the Department which then nominated the structure to the National Register.

The listing in the National Register followed a painstaking process during which historical data on the house was completed and an architect's history of the house and its structure was made.

Its acceptance in the register is based on the architectural significance of the house and the period it represents along with the style of architecture.

The listing in the register makes private property owners eligible to be considered for federal grants-in-aid for historic preservation through state programs and provides protection against demolition. The listing also preserves the historical significance of the property in Washington, D.C.

The National Register of Historic Places is a part of the National Park Services of the U.S. Department of the Interior. A grant of $5,000 was recently approved for the house for 1978. John Lehman, a member of the restoration committee, said the committee has already submitted the preliminary application for a 1979 grant.

As plans progress, thoroughly documented restoration will take place according to the findings of the architect. The first phase of the restoration will begin with the roof which will be made of wood shingles nailed with copper nails. Copper flashings such as those used originally will also be installed.

The Gothic style house was designed by Andrew Johnson Downing and built in 1859. One of its first inhabitants was John Dehner, a Pontiac businessman. In the early 1900's it became known as the Jones house after Henry Jones, a pioneer newspaper publisher, bought it.

Other members of the preservation committee are J. M. Luther, Mrs. Arnold Peterson, Mrs. John Lehman, Roger Wessels, Mrs. Wayne Taylor, Cathy Grafton, Elizabeth Harris, Dorothea Green, Eileen Foley and Reid Tombaugh, president of the historical society.

Death of Mrs. Ethel Marvel in 1979

Ethel Lela Ball was born in 1886 in DeWitt County. She married Everett Marvel in 1905. Mrs. Everett Marvel rented an apartment from the Jones House when it was split into apartments.

Mrs. Marvel was an organist at many Pontiac weddings. She also gave piano lessons at her apartment in the Jones House.

Mrs. Marvel died in 1979 at the age of 92.

CHAPTER 10

The 1981 to 1988 Completion of House Restoration

Reid Tombaugh Dies in 1981

Reid Tombaugh and Francis E. Lehman were the two men who purchased the Jones House with the idea of donating it to the Livingston County Historical Society and restoring the house. The obituary for Reid Tombaugh from the Pantagraph is shown below.

> The Pantagraph
> September 2, 1981
>
> **Reid R. Tombaugh**
>
> PONTIAC (PNS) — The funeral of Reid R. Tombaugh, 79, of 555 W. Grove St., who died Monday, a retired farm manager and lay member of the Illinois Wesleyan University Board of Trustees, will be at 2:30 p.m. Thursday at the First United Methodist Church of Pontiac, the Rev. Frank New and the Rev. James Thompson officiating. Burial will be in Odell Cemetery, Odell. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 tonight at the Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home.
>
> Mr. Tombaugh was born June 29, 1902, in Pontiac, a son of C.R. and Anna Deach Tombaugh. He married Winifred Shinn Feb. 12, 1927, in Chicago. She survives. Also surviving are two daughters, Gladys Weber, Fairbury; and Alice Ramsey, Pontiac; a sister, Mrs. R.J. Reed, Sequin, Wash. ; eight grandchildren; and a great-grand-child. Two infant sons, a sister and a brother preceded him in death.
>
> Mr. Tombaugh, a graduate of the University of Illinois in 1926, was operator of Tombaugh Farm Management. Earlier, he had been a schoolteacher, farmer and partner in Tombaugh-Turner Seed Business.
>
> He served as member of the Pontiac Township High School Board of Education for 17 years and was board president for several years. He was elected a director of the Illinois Association of School Boards in 1958. Mr. Tombaugh was the vice president in 1961 and was president in 1962. He was IASB delegate to the National School Board Association in 1961-62. He was a member of the Association of Illinois Commission for the Advancement of Administration and the Illinois Committee for the North Central Association of Secondary Schools and Colleges.

In 1976, Mr. Tombaugh was one of six persons honored by the University of Illinois College of Agriculture Alumni Association for his contributions to agriculture. He was a promoter of the U of I Grants-in-Aid program in Pontiac.

He was elected a lay member of the IWU board in 1968 by the Central Illinois Conference of the Methodist Church. A member of the First United Methodist Church of Pontiac, Mr. Tombaugh had been a delegate to the National General Conference of the United Methodist Church several times.

He was a member and had been an officer of the Livingston County Tuberculosis Association, Livingston County Farm Bureau and the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce.

Mr. Tombaugh was a former president of the Pontiac Kiwanis Club. He was a member of the Livingston County Historical Society and an authority on Indian lore. He had been a member of the governor's advisory committee of the Illinois Department of Corrections for the last seven years.

Memorials may be made to the Livingston County Historical Society or the U of I College of Agriculture Scholarship Fund.

Pearle Sutherland Story in September of 1981

The Pantagraph published this story about Pearle Sutherland and the Jones House.

The Pantagraph
September 30, 1981

History helps fill life

By: Wanda Leather

PONTIAC — Many years before the women's movement came into being, Pearle Sutherland of Pontiac learned that an involvement with life is one of the main ingredients to fulfillment.

Her current involvement, that of compiling a history of Livingston County which will contain 20 volumes when completed, is a magnanimous task to which she has assigned herself.

Mrs. Sutherland is equal to the task. She is enthusiastic, energetic, and completely dedicated to this project She is sincerely modest, almost embarrassed when she is complimented on her efforts.

She mentions the names of those assisting her — such as Marcia Cox, Lucille Goodrich and John Perring "Others are doing most of the work," she said "The hard part is all of the research and there's lots of typing which Marcia has done and people bring lots of material that we use".

The most remarkable part of this ambitious effort is that Pearle Sutherland is 86 years old She is the historian of the Livingston County Historical Society and started the project in 1977. The huge maroon leather volumes, which are at least 3 inches thick, are housed in the trust department of the Pontiac National Bank. Mrs. Sutherland goes there regularly to sort and compile the material collected.

Once the volumes are finished they will be on display at the Jones House now listed by the National Historic Society in Washington, D.C. The restoration of the house built in 1858 is expected to be finished in five years.

The Livingston County native's personal history is unique. A young widow when her husband died in World War I, Mrs. Sutherland entered Millikin University in 1920. Millikin's then-president was her late husband's uncle.

"Everyone was so wonderful at Millikin." Mrs. Sutherland said. They seemed to take such a personal interest in me. I still have a strong affiliation with the school."

She worked in Chicago in the 1930s She was assigned to Jane Addams Hull House by the Chicago Board of Education and taught current events to non-English speaking people.

During a time when jobs were scarce, she was a vocational adviser for the YWCA and helped form a clearinghouse to help college students get jobs. She taught biology and general science at Steinmetz High School until her retirement when she reached 70.

But Mrs. Sutherland did not retire in the literal sense. She has lots of friends in Pontiac, belongs to and is active in many organizations. Tthe historical project is taking up much of her time.

“I have a tight schedule every day." she said 'There's somewhere to go and something to do all of the time.” Her zest for life is her attitude toward it.

“Nothing bores me”, she said. "When I started compiling this history, it started with a few clippings. It became so interesting that it just grew and grew."

Where does she get all of the energy? "Motivation." she replied. When the 20 volumes are completed, will Pearle Sutherland feel a sense of satisfaction over a job well done?

"It will never be completely done." Mrs. Sutherland said. "We are constantly making new history. There will be volume 21 and then volume 22.”

Pearle Sutherland’s Scrapbooks Found in 2023

These volumes were found in 2023 in storage in the basement of Pontiac City Hall. They are being reviewed to determine the exact content of all the volumes. One of the volumes is about the Historical Society. Some images from this volume were used to write this book.

Pearle also included a photo of herself when she was a younger woman in the Historical Society scrapbook. A copy of this photo is shown below.

Pearle Sutherland as a young woman.

Pantagraph Publishes Two Stories about the Jones House in 1981

On December 27, 1981, the Pantagraph published two different stories about the Jones House. Copies of those stories are shown below.

The Pantagraph
December 27, 1981

Jones House: Gateway to past

By: Virginia Votti

PONTIAC — Every man's home is his castle. There are several castles in the 300 block of East Madison Street. However, one castle stands apart. Its shape is unique. Its condition is excellent. Its uniqueness is reminiscent of an age gone by. Its condition is certainly of most recent care.

A sign on the lawn satisfies the curiosity: "The Jones House — second oldest brick home in Pontiac —built in 1858 — a restoration project of the Livingston County Historical Society and the Department of Conservation — restoration of the Jones house which is listed in the National Register of Historical Places has been funded in part with the assistance of a matching grant-in-aid from the Department of the Interior, Heritage, Conservation and Recreation under the National Historical Preservation Act of 1966."

Bronze plaque

By the front door is a bronze plaque with these words: "This property has been placed on the National Register of Historic Places by the United States Department of the Interior." The effort to get Jones House onto the National Register and the work to restore and maintain the building have taken dozens of people years. The original house was built in 1858 for John Dehner. a prominent Pontiac businessman who ran a general store, also a brick building which he built on the west side of the square. He was also active in politics and was a partner in the Chicago and Paducah Railroad and a partner in the first coal mine in Pontiac in 1866

Four rooms

The original house consisted of four rooms two downstairs and two upstairs with a center hallway going from the front door to the back door. Attached to the outside rear wall. to the east, was a large room, which the society architect thinks may have been the living quarters for the Dehner

family while the house was being built. It may have been used for a kitchen afterward. Each room downstairs has a fireplace. Upstairs, only the east room has a fireplace. One window in that room has been bricked in. The architect says this was done at the time the house was built because someone wanted a closet. The west bedroom had been made into two rooms by means of a partition The smaller room probably was a child's room.

Windows on three sides

The house has windows on three sides, but none on the west side. There is evidence there was a front porch which has now been restored, and a back porch with overhead lattice beams. There are no records to indicate when Dehner left Pontiac, but he did move to St Louis.

Henry C. Jones also was a man prominent in business in Pontiac. In his youth, he assisted his father in the mercantile business in Pontiac and in Shasta, California. In his middle years, he published the "Free Press" and “The Sentinel" newspapers.

He moved in 1875 to Texas where he became a very successful magazine publisher In 1892, Jones returned to Pontiac and helped develop the Pontiac Light, Heat and Power Company.

He began living his house in 1899, staying there until 1921. From 1921 to 1977, when the house passed into the possession of the society, many alterations were made to the house.

The original back room, the extended one, disappeared and at least four more rooms were added to the rear of the house Their exterior walls did not match the original brick. A hole dug under the west room provided room for a furnace. Mop boards had portions cut away, and heat registers were put there. The child's room had become a bathroom. The stairway had been "modernized." The handrail, newel post and spindles had disappeared.

But today, extraneous materials have been taken down and hauled away, leaving the house in its original form, minus the rear room addition. The bricks have been sand-blasted and tuck-pointed. The roof is new.

Chimneys rebuilt

The two chimneys have been rebuilt. The window frames have been repaired and glass panes vintage 1858, have been installed. The front porch has been attached.

One major item missing was a back door. But now, thanks to Pearl Sutherland of Pontiac, a door has been found. Mrs. Sutherland, a noted archivist of Livingston County, told Perring that a garage used for storage by her late father was going to be torn down She told him to take a look at the contents and pull out things he might be able to use. Perring looked through the garage and checked through all the doors. He spotted one he thought had the design and work that resembled the other door on the Jones House. He asked the contractor who was going to build the costly door. After careful examination, the contractor found the door in excellent condition in design, trim, and fit.

Work is being done on the inside at the house. The heating plant and the electrical system are being worked on. Still to be done are the walls, the floors, the woodwork and the stairway.

Thanks to another Pontiac resident, Roscoe Bertram, original pieces of the stairway were returned to Jones House. Bertram had done some work in the Jones House during its periods of remodeling. At the owner's request, Bertram had removed some of the debris.

Bertram had saved the newel posts, spindles and other items, which he donated to the Jones House.

Other pieces were gifts of the house's remodeling and modernization. Some original shutters, hardware trim, windows and other items were never removed They were simply covered because of the remodeling uncovered during restoration work.

The tentative date for the completion of the Jones House is 1985.

Many Aiding House Effort

By: Virginia Votti

PONTIAC — Two historical society members, Francis Lehman and Reid Tombaugh, now both deceased, were the people responsible for the society's interest in acquiring Jones House. In more recent years the house had additions on the outside and changes inside to accommodate the rooms of four apartments.

At the time Lehman and Tombaugh saw the house, it was in a state of disrepair with windows boarded over and charred places from a fire. The city had given the owner two choices: repair the house or tear it down. The society had been discussing a need for a museum. The society holds many items, which are stored in several different places through-out the city. A museum would offer a single location for the items to be displayed for visitors. However, the financial ability of the society to purchase a museum building seemed destined for the far future.

Historical significance

Lehman and Tombaugh recognized the historical significance of the house. They knew also that if the house were torn down there would be no way to replace this inheritance from the past.

The men spoke to other members of the historical society. This building was not the museum the society had in mind. It was a house — too small to be a museum.

But from their discussion a new insight evolved. John Perring, chairman of the restoration committee for the Jones House, said, "More members began to think that a house restored to its original state and furnished with household articles of the time would indeed be a museum."

"It wouldn't be a museum in the sense that you could walk from room to room seeing collections of various and sundry things. The Jones House itself would be restored and furnished with contemporary pieces of the pre-Civil War period."

A committee from the society approached the board of the Humiston Trust for financial assistance. "In 1977, Humiston Trust acquired the house, through the efforts of Lehman and Tombaugh, for the Livingston County Historical Society," Perring said.

Requirements

The society wanted the house to be registered and listed by both the state of Illinois and the federal government. For a house to be considered, certain requirements must be met. Using the guidelines from the Illinois Conservation Department, Lehman and Perring searched, and researched, for almost a year, gathering the necessary information. With the aid of an architect, they presented all necessary information about the house to the Illinois department. The Illinois committee of 15 people voted unanimously that the Jones House be accepted for listing in the National Register. With that endorsement, the information was sent to Washington. On May 5, 1978, the Jones House was officially accepted and placed in the National Register.

"Putting something back to what it was is very expensive. Someone without the experience can look at a restored area and ask, 'How could that possibly cost that much?'"

Many people of Pontiac and Livingston County have given money to be used for the house. The society itself has had several fund-raising projects, namely, its annual ham and beans luncheon. The state gave $25,000 to the society. But, in accepting this sum, the society agreed not to alter the external appearance of the house and that the money would be used only for exterior purposes.

"After the restoration," Perring said, "some regular source of income will be needed to maintain the house. The general pattern seems to be that once a project is completed, gifts and donations no longer are made to the project." "The board members hope that one who is in the position to do so will leave assets by which the income earned could be used for the operation of the building. Or, a donor would give property from which the income could be used for operational purposes," he said. "It is not an unusual arrangement for a trust fund to be set up so that a beneficiary can receive an annual income."

Memorial booklet

At this time, Perring and Marcia Cox are working on a memorial booklet. They intend to have one page for each person in whose memory a memorial has been received, and to list the name of each contributor.

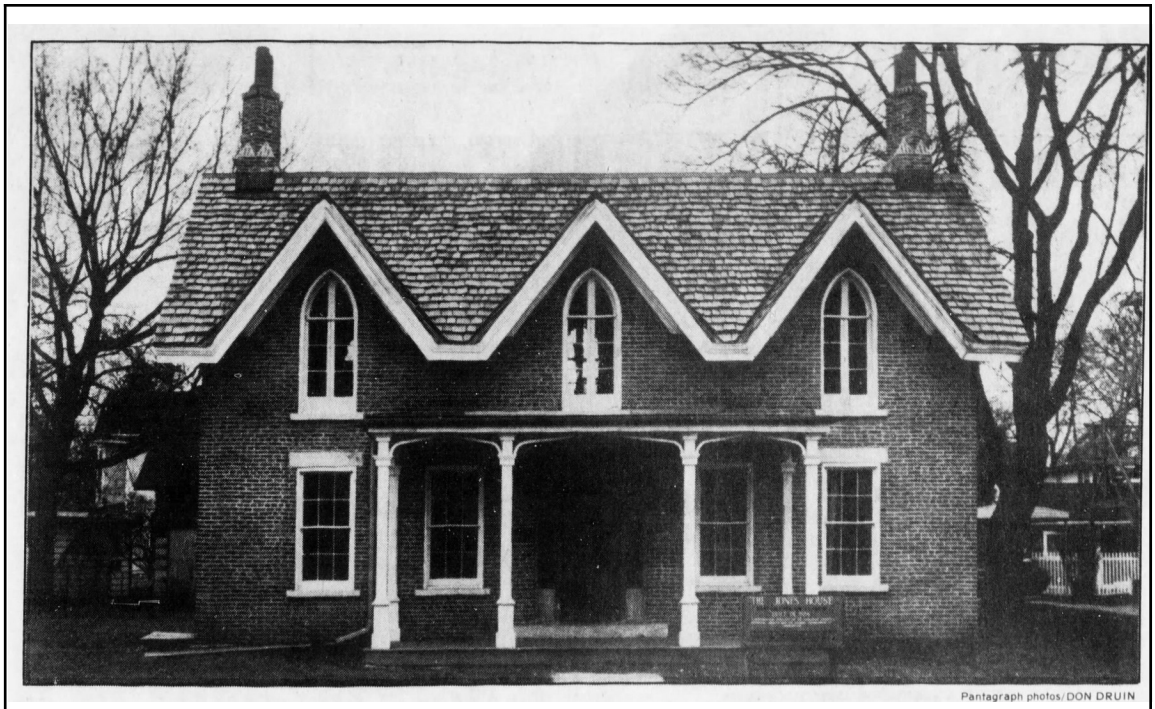
"Putting something back to what it was is very expensive," Perring said. "Someone without the experience can look at a restored area and ask, 'How could that possibly cost that much?' "

"The majority of work done on the house has been done on a bid basis. No one has held us up. Our contractors have been very generous to us. In many instances, they have made useful suggestions, Costs are high for materials We can't get materials from 1858 and duplicating them is expensive."

"During the last years of the house when it was made into apartments inside, woodwork was ruined or even missing in some instances. To replace or repair and make the replacement unnoticeable is expensive. A craftsman is needed."

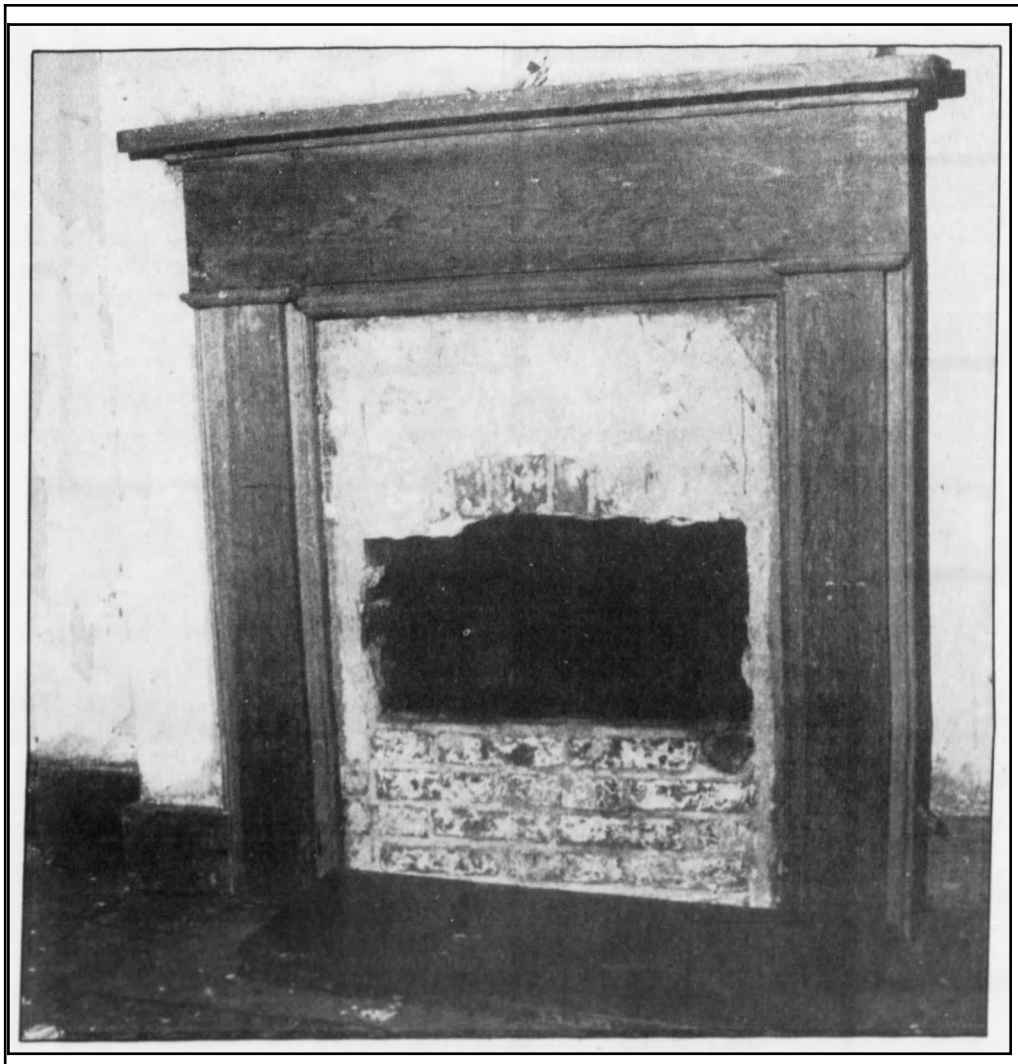
"So far, there have been 50 gifts of $50 and under, 25 gifts of up to $500, one gift of $700, four gifts of $1,000, five gifts of $3,000, one gift of $5,000, and one gift of $6,000 The Humiston Trust Fund donated $22,000 and the state of Illinois gave a grant of $25,000.

Besides Perring, the other members of the Jones House Restoration Committee are Harold Byrne, J.M. Luther, Mary Peterson, Kathy Grafton. J. Paul Yost, Betty Harris, Claire Potter, Linda Unterman, and Marcia Cox.

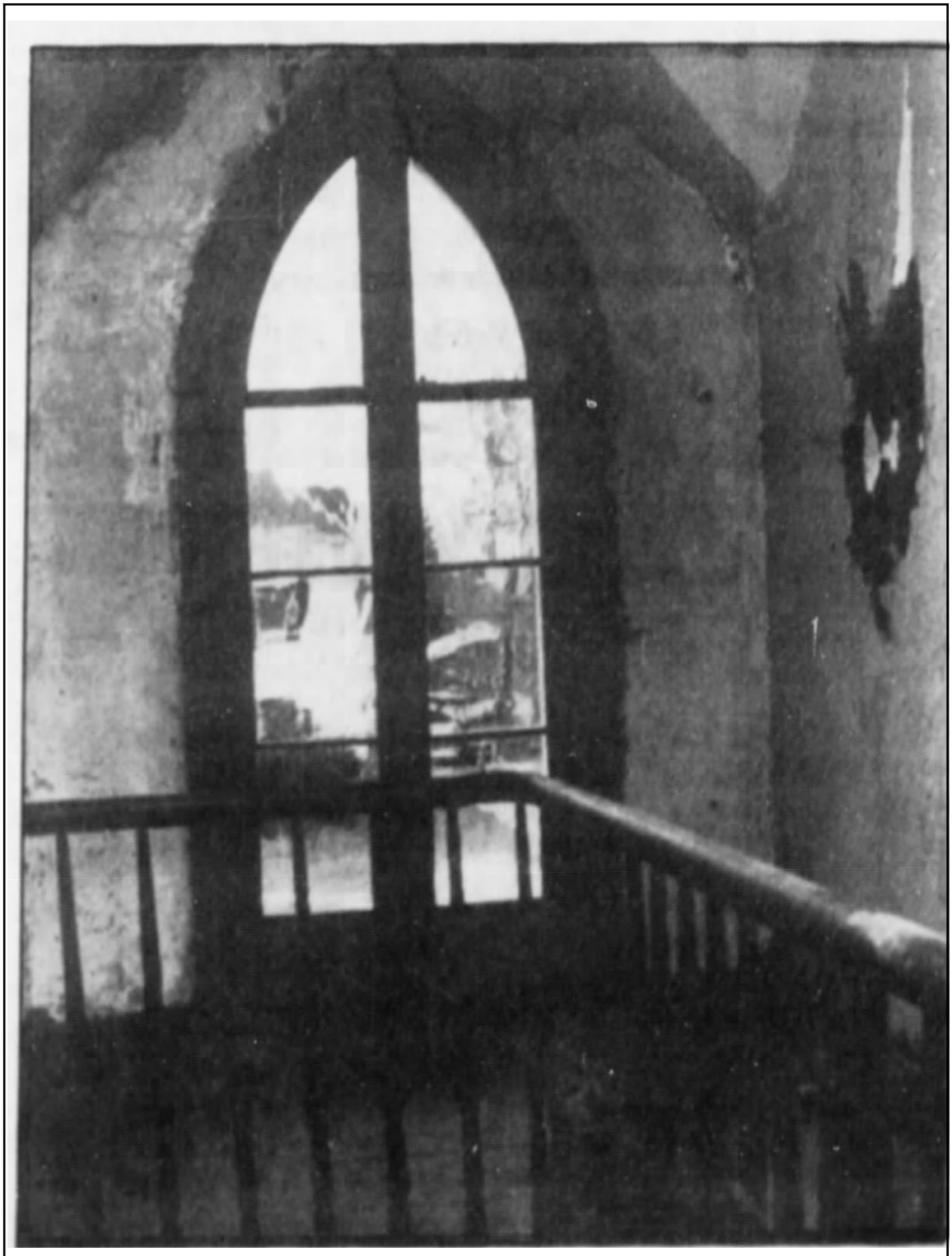


Pantagraph photos/DON DRUIN

The house was built in 1858, when the first brick house in Pontiac was 2 years old and county population was about 11,000.



Each room downstairs has a fireplace. Upstairs, only the east room has a fireplace.



Window frames have been repaired, but the stairway is on the list of things to be done.

Thelma Asper Involved with Jones House Restoration in 1983

The Pantagraph published the following article about the Jones House restoration project.

The Pantagraph
November 23, 1983

Jones House Shaping Up

By: Terrie Joplin

PONTIAC — Seven years have passed since the home was purchased and the owners have yet to polish the antique furniture, relax in a rocking chair in the sitting room, or pull the handmade quilts over plump, down-filled pillows.

But the owners are not too impatient. They knew when they purchased the house that neither they, nor anyone else, would ever live in it.

When the Livingston County Historical Society bought the Jones home in Pontiac in 1976, they knew they faced a formidable project. The house, which was built in 1858 by John Dehner, is the second oldest brick home in the city, and was in danger of being condemned.

Even in its dilapidated state, though, the house had charm. Mary Dievendorf said that she has always thought the house was beautiful. Mrs. Dievendorf and Thelma Asper are co-chairpersons of the interior restoration committee. Their plan is to have the west sitting room decorated by spring.

The home is a two-story, four-room building in the Gothic style, with arched windows and a gabled roof. Named for Henry Jones, a prominent Pontiac newspaperman who occupied it from 1899 to 1921, the home has undergone many alterations. Several rooms had been added and the dwelling made into three apartments.

Now it has been restored to the original design. In 1978, it was listed in the National Register of Historic Places. That accomplishment means that certain regulations must be followed in renovating the house, said John Perring, chairman of the restoration committee.

On the interior, for example, existing plaster in good condition must be preserved, so the damaged plaster was carefully chipped away, and the new plaster applied to the irregular shapes of the original. The smooth

white walls and ceilings display the old and new in a crazy quilt design of yellowish lines which mark the mergers.

“The state provided $25,000 for the restoration of the exterior,” Perring said. “When one looks at the house, one sees the thick, gray shake roof, the rebuilt, red twin chimneys, and the arched windows in their restored frames gleaming with the wavy, pitted glass of the era.”

Wooden tracery curves in the small panes framing the front door which has been stripped to the bare wood. A concrete walk, which will be replaced with one of brick, leads to the new front porch.

The brick exterior looks well-matched and intact. For repairs, stacks of bricks were brought from a Peoria building of the same era. Mortar was mixed to duplicate the original.

“Inside the home, a stairway rises from a central hallway and curves to the east. The stripped walnut spindles and newel post are back in their original positions after having been removed to make way for a wall. Only three spindles had to be reproduced,” said Perring.

“Two large square rooms open from either side of the short, narrow hallway. The wide floor boards are dark with age and use, and marked where carpets once lay. The floors will be sanded and stained, and perhaps decorated with in-grain carpeting,” said Mrs. Asper, which were sewn in narrow strips.

The soft brick of the three fireplaces in the home is pitted and blackened from wood and coal fires. The hearths are unfinished. Comfort, though, comes through the metal vents dotting the floors. A heat pump, which will provide both heat and cooling, rests in the backyard.

There are only two shallow closets in the home, but the ample room dimensions suggest the presence of wardrobes. Although there may be a lavish piece of furniture, the bulk of the furniture will be ordinary, said Perring. Dehner, who ran a general store, was not a wealthy man, he said.

At the top of the stairs, light flows from the windows facing north and south. In the west bedroom, a small area thought to be a child's room, faces south.

"We'd like to start with the child's room," said Mrs. Asper, but she and Mrs. Dievendorf said that that would be impractical, because the purpose of the restoration is to make the home available to the public as quickly as possible. Having the sitting room decorated and available for viewing is the more practical choice.

There have been many delays and money is a problem. "You could build a new house much cheaper," said Perring. In order to reproduce the interior window trim, for instance, cutters had to be made for a lathe. There are also priorities as to how the money should be used.

Mrs. Asper said that wallpaper money went toward the brick wall, which was erected to protect the west side of the house from drainage. The low, wide wall itself is protected now by sheets of black plastic. A limestone cap of three inches with an overhang of two inches will finish the wall. But, said Perring, the Joliet limestone, which is harder than Livingston county limestone and which was used both for the original and re-stored window sills, is available only on a sporadic basis.

When the committee was faced with the drainage problem, they decided that a low brick wall would be appropriate to that era. When work was actually begun, though, said Perring, they made the exciting discovery that they were replacing the past. The present wall was built on the footings of a previous one.

In the backyard there are several projects awaiting the committee's attention. The wall is to be extended along the east perimeter. A porch with "an arbor effect" and an outbuilding will be replaced, said Perring, and a turn of the century carriage house will be renovated.

A major project is the replacement of a wooden room at the rear of the house in which Dehner lived while his brick home was being built. The tantalizing shape of the missing room is apparent on the brick wall where the roof line rises to a peak, and the mortar between the bricks was not smoothed because the bricks were put directly against the one-room cabin.

When it is replaced, the room will be made into a kitchen and dining area, said Mrs. Dievendorf. With the exception of the wall, though, these projects will wait.

Work on the interior will begin this January, said Perring. Woodwork will be finished and a local decorator will apply the wallpaper, which will be selected from an assortment of replicas.

To guide their restoration efforts, the committee has relied on several books, the chief of which is a replica of Andrew Jackson Downing's "Architecture of Country Houses" which was originally published in 1850. The book gives plans and detailed descriptions of popular styles.

Work will proceed as income dictates. "We keep solvent by only doing what we can pay for," said Perring. He added that memorials are a significant source of income.

As work begins this winter on the west sitting room, the committee will direct its attention to restoring the other rooms. The public will see the sitting room first, but eventually, said Perring, the rest of the house will be open "several days a week" to those who enjoy a look at life in the 1850s.

John Perring Illustration of the Jones House in 1983

Mr. Perring made a hand-drawn illustration of what the Jones House might look like after it was renovated.

Hand-drawn sketch of Jones House by John Perring in 1983

Jones House Project Needs More Money to Finish the Restoration in 1984

The Pantagraph published the following story about the Jones House project.

The Pantagraph
July 3, 1984

Jones House restoration needs funds

By: Wanda Leather

PONTIAC — A push for extra funds needed to finish the restoration of the Jones House will be a major project for the Livingston County Historical Society according to John Perring, restoration committee chairman.

The Humiston Trust has offered to match funds if the society can raise $11,250 by next April.

The completion of the house is estimated to cost $28,000 and with $5,500 in the society's treasury, the amount sought through fund raising would take care of the additional work needed to be done.

An 18 by 24 foot addition to the house will make the house true to the original plans of John Dehner, the original owner who lived there in the middle of the 19th century.

Thus far, most of the money for restoration has been raised by public donation and by exhibits at the Arts and Craft festival and a ham and bean fund-raising dinner.

"We are thinking now in terms of sending letters asking for subscriptions from residents," said Perring.

Restoration started in 1977, and the society has always had to exert a great deal of effort to keep up funds coming in as work progressed.

"The public has always come through," Perring said.

The house is the second oldest brick house in Pontiac, the oldest being the structure at 315 W. Howard St. According to records, that house belonged to Henry Jones also but records do not indicate if this is the same Henry Jones that moved into the house at 314 E. Madison St., now being restored.

Perring said courthouse and Livingston Abstract records show that the lot on Madison was first owned by a Simion DeWitt and involved another owner before being sold to John Dehner in 1858.

Records also indicate that there was an escalation in taxes which designate that the lot was improved with what may have been a structure being built on the lot.

This was in 1858. Jones was to have purchased the house in 1899 and lived there until 1921.

Now the historical society will continue with their regular fund raisers and by appealing to the public.

A special appeal for extra funds through direct mail and the media outlets will ask that donations be sent or brought to Marcia Cox at the Pontiac National Bank.

Robert A. Schlosser Booklets Published About Jones House in 1985

Robert A. Schlosser researched and wrote two booklets about the Jones House in 1985. The first was the ***Genealogy of the Jones House*** and the second was ***Appendix One for the Genealogy of the Jones House.***

Paper copies of these two booklets are in the archives of the Livingston County Historical Society. Copies of the booklets were scanned and uploaded to Archive.Org in October of 2023. They can be viewed or downloaded from this website.

Robert A. Schlosser Published Twelve Historical Pontiac Events in 1986

In April of 1986, Mr. Schlosser published a three-page document titled ***One Dozen Noteworthy Historical Items.*** This document was transcribed and the results are shown below.

ONE DOZEN NOTEWORTHY HISTORICAL ITEMS

Prepared by Robert Arnold Schlosser
President Livingston County Historical Society
(4/1986)

1. Birth of Pontiac, 27 July 1837. The proprietors were: Henry Weed, Lucius W. and Seth M. Young. The surveyor who laid out the town of Pontiac was Isaac Whitaker (also spelled Whicher and Whisher). To sway the county commissioners to make Pontiac the seat of the county, the proprietors offered several inducements which included the building of a courthouse and the construction of a "good and substantial wagon bridge"* across the Vermilion River.

Ref. Deed book A, p. 63; *1878 History, p. 254; and 1940 History, p. 7.

2. Good and substantial wagon bridge. The bridge specified in Item ONE was constructed in 1840 by Isaac Whitaker, county surveyor and engineer. Its cost was directly borne by the proprietors of the town of Pontiac. Most likely the bridge was built of timber, and it is doubtful that it was covered. If covered it would probably have lasted longer than seven or eight years, see item FIVE.

Ref. 1940 History, p. 22.

3. Courthouse. The full cost of the first courthouse was also directly borne by the proprietors of Pontiac. It was built on the public square of land that had been donated by the proprietors, the same location that we have today. That first courthouse was accepted by two County Commissioners on 23 July 1842.

Ref. 1878 History, p. 299: and 1940 History, pages 21 and 72.

4. Plat of Pontiac. On 20 April 1847, county surveyor, Amos Edwards, filed a report about resetting the corner stone at the northeast corner of the public square. The report includes a plat of the town of Pontiac. Streets named on the plat have remained

essentially the same. The most northerly street was North Street, the most southerly was South Street, the most westerly was Oak Street, and the most easterly was Hazel Street. The city, or town, limits extended a block beyond the first three named streets and a half block beyond Hazel.

Ref. Deed book A, p. 64.

5. Carried away bridge. In September of 1847, Henry Jones, J. H. DeMoss, and Philip Rollins received a $450 contract from the County Court to build a new bridge. In March of 1849, shortly after its completion, the new bridge "was carried away by a freshet."* [Note. Melting snow plus a heavy rain can produce a freshet.] It is unclear whether the bridge was salvaged or replaced.

Ref. *1878 History, p. 260; and 1940 History, p. 22.

6. Town of Richmond. In 1851, proprietors Henry Jones and Henry Loveless laid out the town of Richmond about two miles east of Pontiac. Although lots did not sell, the proprietors had hopes that a north-south railroad would be built near their town. In 1854 the railroad came, however, its tracks were laid to the west of Pontiac. Richmond died, but its name clung to the area for many years.

Ref. Deed book C, p. 174; and 1940 History, p. 8.

7. Three judges. Billings P. Babcock was elected to the office of County Judge in 1853 for a term of four years, taking office on 7 December 1853. Judge Babcock resigned at the end of his third year, and Judge Charles M. Lee served out the fourth year. Lee was followed by Judge Henry Jones, who won the office in the November 1857 election. (This Henry Jones* came to Pontiac in 1855; the Henry Jones** mentioned in items FIVE and SIX died in 1854.) During the three years that Judge Babcock held office, the first truss bridge at Mill Street and the county's second courthouse were constructed, see items EIGHT and TEN.

Ref. 1888 History, p. 523; 1940 History, p. 67; LCHS UPDATE, dated 24 October 1985; also *deed book F, p. 296 and **probate #1115.

8. Truss bridge. The Mill Street bridge built during Judge Babcock's term of office, see item SEVEN, used trusses made of wood. This covered bridge remained in use until replaced by an iron bridge sometime before 1888.

Ref. 1888 History, p. 523.

9. First brick building. Standing at 315 West Howard Street is a brick residence that was built by the Henry Jones who became a County Judge, see item SEVEN. Reported as the first brick building in the county, construction probably started late in the fall of 1855, with completion early in 1856.

Ref. Deed book F, p. 296; 1878 History, p. 242; and LCHS UPDATE, dated 24 October 1985.

10. Second courthouse. Courthouse number two, a brick structure, was constructed in 1856, the third and last year that Judge Babcock held office. The county court accepted the new edifice on 6 December 1856. On 4 July 1874, this building was destroyed by fire; fortunately, a vault--built a couple of years earlier--protected the records.

Ref. 1878 History, p. 242; 1940 History, p. 72, and LCHS UPDATE, dated 24 October 1985.

11. JONES HOUSE. Built by John Dehner, the JONES HOUSE at 314 East Madison Street, is the second oldest brick residence in Pontiac. Mr. Dehner purchased this property in October of 1857. John Dehner lost little time in starting the construction of his brick home, and it was completed rather early in 1858. In August of 1899, the late Henry C. Jones, a son of Judge Jones, purchased this property. It is from Henry C. Jones that the house gets its present name.

Ref. Deed book M, p. 64; deed book 120, p. 588; and GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE, paragraphs 21, 40, and 46.

12. Bird's eye view. The "Remember?" feature by Barbara Sancken in a 1985 issue of The Daily Leader carried a report dated Feb. 4, 1945. The report stated that Miss Emeline Cowan had found several collector's items in an old trunk. The text concerning one item shall be quoted: "A color print showed a bird's eye view of Pontiac as it was in 1869, only 32 years after the town was founded. A covered bridge spanned the Vermilion at Mill street; the only other bridge was that of the C. & A. railroad. A race track was located on the present site of Play park. There were no east-west streets south of South street."

Ref. The Daily Leader of February 4, 1985, page 4.

DEEDS. DEEDS and PROBATES are on file at the Courthouse.

1878 History. This book is entitled: The HISTORY OF LIVINGSTON COUNTY, ILLINOIS. Published by Wm. Le Baron, Jr., & Co., Chicago, 1878.

1888 History. This book is entitled: PORTRAIT AND BIOGRAPHICAL ALBUM of Livingston County, Ill. Published 1888, by Chapman Brothers, Chicago.

1940 History. This book is entitled: INVENTORY OF THE COUNTY ARCHIVES OF ILLINOIS, NO. 53, LIVINGSTON COUNTY [PONTIAC]. Prepared by The Illinois Historical Records Survey, Division of Professional and Service Projects, Works Project Administration, Chicago, Illinois, 1940.

LIBRARY. History books listed above, LCHS UPDATE, GENEALOGY OF THE JONES HOUSE, and microfilm of The Daily Leader can be seen at the Pontiac Public Library.

Comments About the 1986 Schlosser Twelve Noteworthy List

In 1986 when the booklets were published, the oldest brick structure in Livingston County was still standing at 315 West Howard St. in Pontiac, It was torn down in 1989.

The Strevell House was not mentioned on this list. This house was built in 1855 and Abraham Lincoln spent an afternoon and evening at the home after giving a lecture at the Pontiac Presbyterian Church. According to Tom Ewing, the history of the Strevell House was not well known until the Historical Society purchased it in 2008 for renovation. The Strevell House was added to the National Register of Historic Places in 2023.

Jones House Project Topic of 1986 Historical Society Meeting

The Pantagraph published a notice for this meeting.

> The Pantagraph
> October 21, 1986
>
> **PONTIAC**
>
> **Jones House focus of next society meeting**
>
> The history and restoration of the Jones House will be the focus of the next Livingston County Historical Society meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Pontiac City Hall, 115 W. Howard St.
>
> John Perring will present the program. The Jones House, built in 1857 and 1858, is the oldest brick home in Pontiac and is owned and operated by the society as a museum.
>
> Historical society membership is open to anyone interested in the history of Livingston County. Annual dues are $8. Guests are welcome at meetings.

1987 Fund Raising Drive Started to Complete the Jones House Restoration

The Pantagraph published an article about this fund raising project.

> October 6, 1987
>
> The Pantagraph
>
> By: Martha Sullivan
>
> **Money sought for restoration of Jones House**
>
> PONTIAC — The Livingston County Historical Society has kicked off a fund drive to raise money for the addition of a kitchen to the historic Jones House, but work is proceeding without all the money. John Peering, a spokesman for the society, said yesterday the first phase of restoring the kitchen that was destroyed in a 1975 fire is well under way. The first phase includes framing in the room and two porches, roofing, installation of doors and windows, and rough plumbing works. In the second and third phases, interior walls and flooring, exterior siding,

completion of a bathroom and storage closet and addition of furnishings and fixtures will be completed.

The Historical Society is attempting to raise about half the $35,000 needed for the kitchen and two porches, which will mark completion of restoration on the house, Perring said. Because the fire destroyed the wooden portion of the house, which society members believe was the original structure, it must be made of new materials. But Perring said everything possible is being done to ensure the new materials duplicate the original as closely as possible. Some concessions to modern living are being made, he added, in an effort to make the house attractive to local groups that might use it for meetings.

The bathroom and storage closet were not part of the original structure, erected in the mid-1800s, and one of the porches at the back will be a little smaller as a result.

In addition, the kitchen will include a refrigerator, sink and stove that were not part of the original. Researchers are not certain whether the original wood portion at the back of the brick home was one or two rooms, but the addition will be one room. "We can tell by examining tax records when it was a lot and then when the kitchen was built," Perring said. "It could have been one or two rooms; we don't know how it was divided up."

Officials also are not absolutely positive the back portion, which they speculate served as living quarters while the front, brick portion was constructed, was eventually a kitchen.

"But it makes sense," Perring said. "We are rebuilding what we think was there." The society hopes to have all work on the addition complete by next spring, and Perring or Dorothy Mortimore will take reservations for use of the house next summer.

The kitchen addition will mark the end of restoration of the house itself, Perring said, but an exterior wall and walks and a garden and landscaping typical of the 1850s or 1860s are still in the planning stages. The society will contact businesses and members and friends of the society for the fund drive.

Before and After Exterior Photos of the Jones House

The exact date the house restoration is not known at this time. It was likely completed shortly after the last 1987 Pantagraph article about the restoration.

The dramatic restoration of the Jones House can be illustrated by looking at photos of the house before the restoration process started, then what the house looked like after restoration. The "Before" photos below were taken from the 1977 application to add the Jones House to the National Register of Historic Places. The "After" photos were taken by the author in the Summer of 2023 after the exterior white trim was painted.

Before Renovation

After Renovation

Before Renovation

After Renovation

December 31, 1987 Issue of Update Historical Society Newsletter

In this newsletter, Robert Schlosser commented on several mysteries about the Jones House. These mysteries included the following items.

Was the brick structure at 315 W. Howard the oldest brick house in Pontiac?

Why does the structure at 315 W. Howard look significantly different in the 1869 Bird's Eye view document versus the 1989 appearance?

Why is it called the Jones House and not the Dehner House?

A copy of the 1987 newsletter is shown below.

Historic Structures

The the oldest known structure in Pontiac is the residence at 401 West Livingston Street. The building site was purchased by Z. H. Nettleton on the first day of July in 1855. It is presumed that the residence was built in the last half of that year. Today, William A. Harris of Chatsworth is the owner. Mr. Harris should be commended for painting and preserving the integrity of this residence.

The oldest brick structure in the county, located at 315 West Howard Street, was recently sold, and it will probably be torn down in the near future. On the first day of October 1855, exactly three months after the Nettleton purchase, the site for the above structure was purchased by Henry Jones who came here front Emmett County, Iowa.

Soon after the purchase, Henry Jones put up a rather plain two story rectangular brick building in which he would operate a retail venture. In an 1869 drawing entitled, "A Bird's Eye View of Pontiac," this structure is shown in enough detail to get a good idea of its style and shape.

In 1871, two years after the drawing was made, the tax valuation of the structure was approximately one-fifth of its 1869 valuation. Such a drop in valuation could have been caused by fire.

Perhaps in 1871, the front wall was rebuilt and the cast wing added. In the "Bird's Eye View" drawing there was no east wing and the front wall has a different appearance. The junctions of the rebuilt front wall to the old sidewalls are clearly visible.

Original sidewalks were made of brick hauled from B1oomington. In the "Bird's Eye View" drawing it can be seen that the front wall of the

structure had straight stone lintels above each window, matching the lintels that we see in the west wall. Windows in the front wall today have brick arches and decorative key-stones. Adding the east wing and changing the style of windows altered the architectural style of the building.

The above reconstruction is reflected in the 1872 tax valuation. It was back on a par with 1869 and previous years. It was probably at this time that it became a residence. This possibility is supported by the following quote from page 242 of The History Of Livingston County, Illinois, 1878: "Judge Henry Jones erected, at Pontiac, the first brick building ever erected in the county. It is the one that has recently been remodeled and is now occupied as a residence Joseph P. Turner."

Down through the years, additions have been added. For some years it was a funeral home. It is presently divided into apartments.

In October of 1857, John Delmer purchased property on East Madison Street, the property that is now known as the Jones House. John Dehmer, a Pontiac merchant, built the brick residence that our Society has restored.

Although Henry Jones erected his store building two years before the East Madison Street residence was built, John Delmer had lived in his lovely brick home for more than twelve years before the store building became a residence.

Thus, of the two buildings, the home built by John Dehner is the earlier residence. The architectural style of the brick portion of the Jones House has never been altered. All four walls are original. In 1975, the home was severely damaged by fire. A timely purchase, on behalf of the Society, saved the fire ravaged structure from probably demolition. The brick portion of the building has been restored to its original fine appearance. There is evidence of a back room of frame construction that was in place before the brick portion was built. This back room served as a kitchen, but it was consumed in the 1875 fire. Now in construction is a new kitchen, a bath room, and a bit of storage space.

The Jones House gets its name from Henry C. Jones, a son of Henry Jones, who built the brick store building on Howard Street. Henry C. Jones purchased the residence in 1899. He died in 1921, and Mary Jones, his widow, died in 1942. Well before the death of Mary, the residence had become known as the Jones House.

CHAPTER 11

1989 Oldest Brick Structure Torn Down

Oldest Brick Building in Livingston County is Torn Down in 1989

The Pantagraph published this story about the oldest brick structure in Livingston County. The building was torn down after this article was published.

The Pantagraph
January 15, 1989

Livingston County's oldest brick structure faces uncertain future

By: James Keeran

PONTIAC — When tomorrow bumps into yesterday, yesterday usually loses. It has always been that way. The new replaces the old. And that is probably what will happen to the first brick structure built in Livingston County because the only people who really want it, cannot really afford it. The building is at 315 W. Howard St., immediately east of Bill Ramseyer's Standard service station.

Ramseyer owns it, but he does not want it. He would sell it, he said, "If somebody would come and offer me some money for it." Ramseyer is also reticent to talk about the building. "No matter what I do," he said, "there's going to be some people mad at me." But he did say "I would hope there's going to be a service station there."

Jim and Carla Brewer would like to buy the building. They said Ramseyer told them he plans to demolish the building and expand his service station on the property. The Brewers want to save the building, move it, renovate it and open a for-profit business in it to be known as the Livingston County Genealogical Society.

John Perring, president of the Livingston County Historical Society, and Robert A. Schlosser, immediate past president of the society, are aware of what is likely to happen to the building, and are only mildly concerned.

"Just call us concerned citizens," said Mrs. Brewer, who, with her husband, did a little professional genealogy work last year and this year

has dreams of turning it into a full-time occupation. But the rub, of course, is money.

The Brewers say it would cost nearly $120,000 to save the building. They have a firm estimate from a Chicago area moving company of $77,000 to move the structure. Ramseyer, they said, told them he would sell it to them for $10,000. A suitable lot would cost $9,000. A new foundation would cost $15,000, and it would cost another $5,000 to get utilities and plumbing reconnected. Then they could begin planning the renovation.

It was their hope that a state or federal agency would step in and pick up the cost of saving the oldest brick building in the county, Brewer said. But, after several telephone calls, "we were very disillusioned."

And, while they haven't given up hope, they believe private financing is the only chance to save the building; and they don't think they can get it.

"We'll look for a little while longer," Brewer said, "and if we don't find anything, we'll have to give up." "We'll have a little piece of history that's gone," he said. "We feel that it's a shame ... that the oldest residence in Pontiac ... is to be torn down and the second one is still there."

Only part of that last statement is accurate.

The building in question is the oldest brick structure in the entire county, not just Pontiac, but it was not built as a residence. When it was built in 1858 "the west brick portion was originally erected as a retail store," according to Robert Schlosser's monograph, "More Than One Dozen Noteworthy Historical Items," published in 1987 when he was still president of the historical society.

His research shows that the building was built of bricks hauled to Pontiac from Bloomington, that Henry Jones and Edwin C. Jones (he could not find out if they were related) operated a store of some kind in the new brick structure, that Henry bought Edwin out in 1857, that he borrowed money for the buyout, that he borrowed money to pay off that loan, that he and a son left for California in 1859, and that second loan was never paid.

The loan was foreclosed and John L. Turner bought the building the following year. There may have been a fire in the building in the late 1860s, and through the years various additions and renovations have detracted from its historical significance, Schlosser said, and he does not know what remains that is original in the structure.

"The integrity of the building has been violated," Schlosser said. In other words: "It's a pile of brick." The second oldest structure that Brewer referred to is in fact that, but it was built in 1857 first as a residence. So it is the second oldest brick building in the county, but the oldest brick residence.

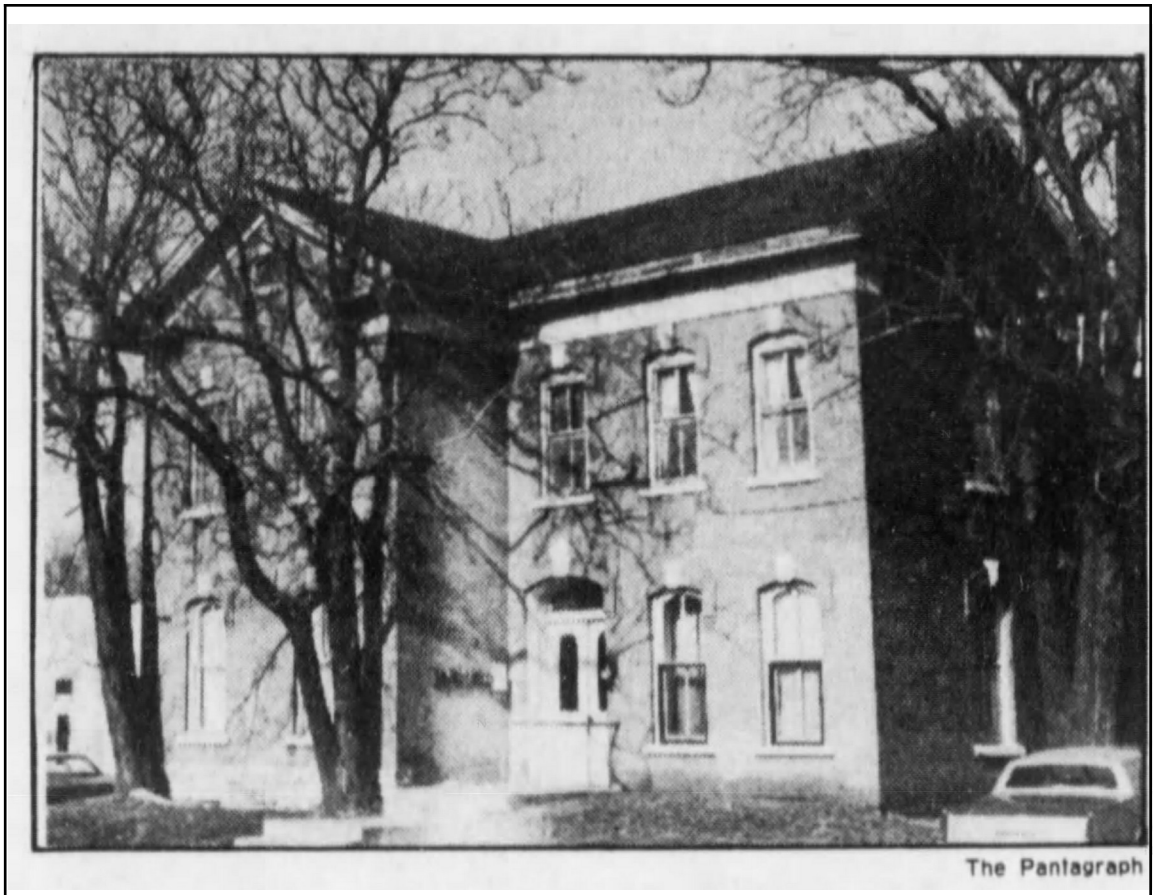
Located at 314 E. Madison St. in Pontiac, it is owned and maintained by the historical society. And, while the first brick building was built by a fellow named Jones and the second was built by John Dehner, it is the second that is known as "The Jones House" because, while the Jones who built the first may have skipped town on a loan, his son came back and bought the Dehner house.

That Jones, Henry C., lived there for 21 years before he died, and his widow stayed on another 21 years. It came on the market in 1976 and two Pontiac men bought it with the historical society in mind, according to Schlosser's monograph.

The society, helped by a trust fund, bought it in 1977 and has been restoring it since. Current society president John Perring said Ramseyer asked about the society's interest in the building next to his service station before he bought it about a year and a half ago.

The society considered it, Perring said, and decided it would be too expensive. “We who believe in restoration sometimes have to admit that a house may be beyond practical means of bringing it back," he said. Besides, the building "is not in very good shape."

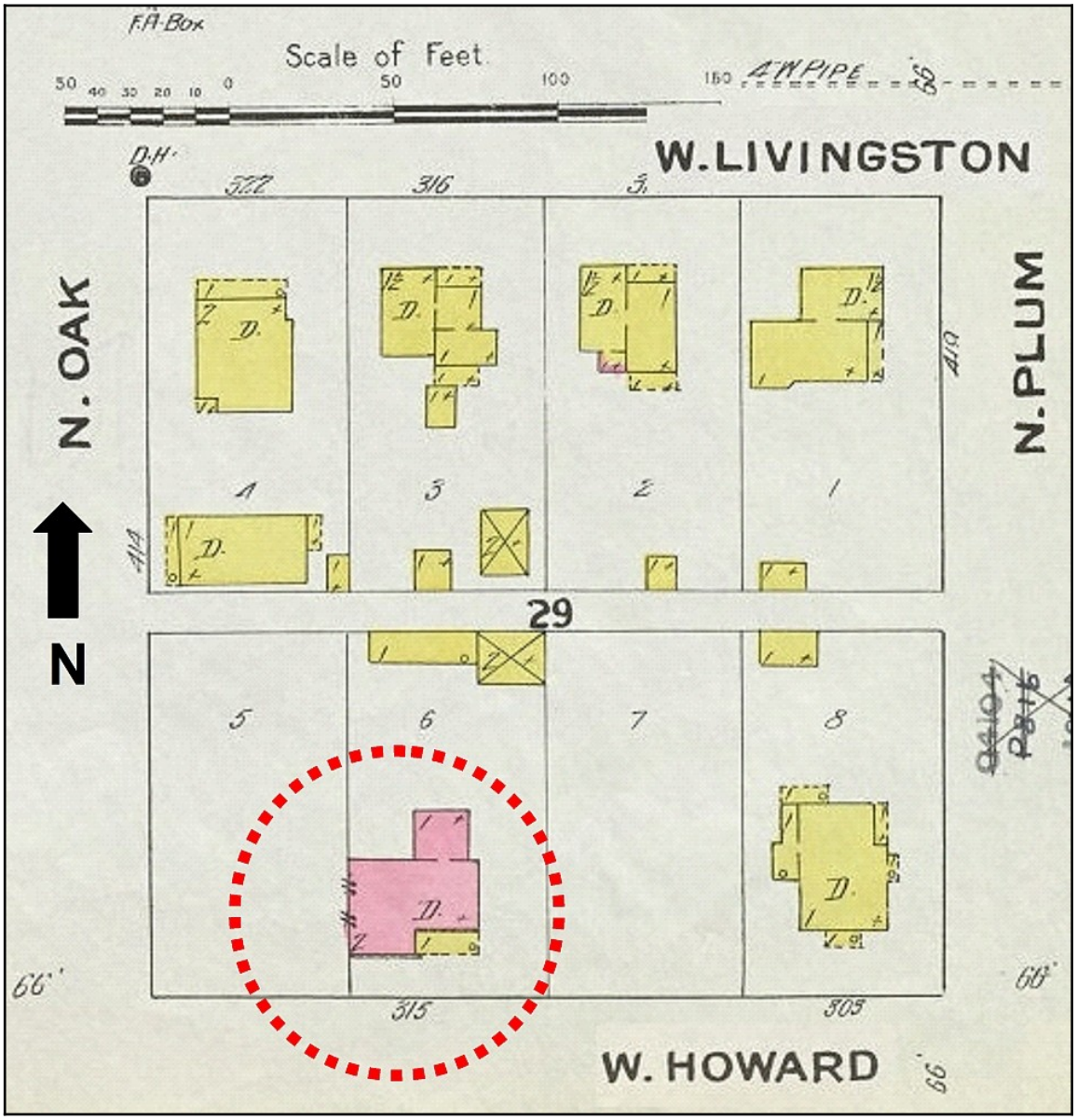
The Brewers admit their hopes are probably futile, and, as a last resort, say they would be partially satisfied if somebody would at least install a plaque near the site recognizing it for his historical significance to the county.



Jim and Carla Brewer would like to save this building at 315 West Howard, Pontiac. The building is Livingston County's oldest brick structure.

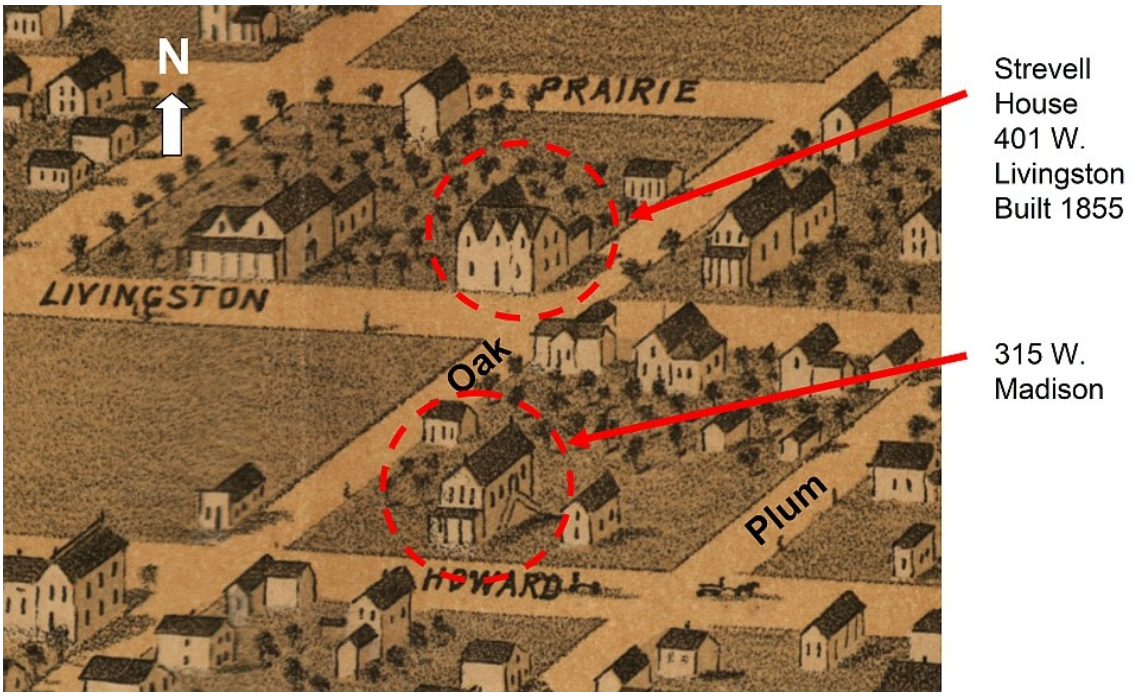
Block and Lot Number for 315 W. Howard Street Structure

Using the 1910 Sanborn map of Pontiac, we can identify that the oldest brick structure in Pontiac was in Block 29 and Lot 6 which corresponds to the street address of 315 W. Howard Street in Pontiac.



The review of the 1910 Sanborn map was done to determine which block number and lot number corresponded to the street address of 315 W. Howard St. Once the block number and lot number was found, the old property tax records could be searched. The old property tax records are organized by block number and lot number, not by street addresses. The 1910 Sanborn map image of the house closely matches the 1989 photo.

The Oldest Brick Structure is Shown on the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Pontiac



315 W. Howard Shown on 1869 Bird's Eye View Illustration

The appearance of the structure at 315 West Howard St. is significantly different than the views shown on the 1910 Sanborn map and the 1989 photo of the structure.

One possible explanation is that the structure was first built as a retail business structure. It is long and narrow, which matches the type of business structure shown around the courthouse square on the 1869 Bird's Eye view. When the structure was converted to a residence, they could have significantly changed the structure to make it more suitable for a home.

Pearle Sutherland Dies in 1989

Pearle was a supporter of the Jones House Restoration Project. She also made historical scrapbooks and some of her materials were used to write this book. The Pantagraph published her obituary and it is shown below.

> June 19, 1989
> Pantagraph
>
> PONTIAC — Pearle Kneale Sutherland, 94, a resident of Evenglow Lodge, Pontiac, died at 8:40 a.m. yesterday (June 18, 1989) at Saint James Hospital after a short illness. Her funeral will be at I p.m. Wednesday at First United Methodist Church, Pontiac, the Rev. Jack Travelstead officiating. Burial will be in Pontiac South Side Cemetery Visitation will be one hour before the funeral service at the church. Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home in Pontiac is in charge of arrangements.
>
> Mrs. Sutherland was born May 23, 1895, in Kempton, a daughter of John William and Anna Corkhill Kneale. She married Edmund White Sutherland on Dec. 12, 1917, in Chicago. He died in 1918. Survivors include a niece; a nephew; and grandnieces and grandnephews.
>
> She graduated from Kempton High School, Illinois Wesleyan Academy and Kankakee Conservatory in Music. She received a bachelor of science degree at Milliken University, Decatur and a master's degree from Northwestern University. She also attended the University of Chicago and Illinois State University. She was a retired educator, teaching for 35 years in Chicago.

Pearle's Husband Died of the Spanish Flu at Camp Grant in Rockford

Further investigation found that Pearle's husband was a college graduate and he had finished law school before he went to Camp Grant in Rockford for WWI. Her husband died of pneumonia from the Spanish Flu at Camp Grant. Pearl and her husband were married less than one year when her husband died.

Robert Schlosser Dies in 1989

Mr. Schlosser was a major supporter of the Jones House restoration project. He also extensively researched the history of the Jones House and the families that lived in it. His obituary from the Pantagraph is shown below.

July 24, 1989
Pantagraph

Robert Schlosser Jr.

PONTIAC ─ Robert A. Schlosser Jr., 80, of Pontiac died at 9:08 p.m. Saturday (July 22, 19891 at Saint James Hospital, Pontiac. He had been seriously ill the past week. His funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at First United Methodist Church, Pontiac, the Rev. Jack Travelstead and the Rev. Gretchen Stinebaugh officiating. Burial will be in South Side Cemetery, Pontiac. Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home, Pontiac.

Mr. Schlosser was born Feb. 9, 1909, in Rowe, a son of Robert A. and Amelia Johnson Schlosser. Survivors include five brothers, Richard D., Joliet; Arthur O., Woodstock, N.Y.; the Rev. John R., Hubbard, Iowa; James E., Kennewick, Wash.; and Donald O., Elmhurst; and two sisters, Marie Lukes, Elmhurst, and Betty Golden, South Amana, Iowa. He was preceded in death by three brothers.

Mr. Schlosser owned and operated Schlosser Radio Service in Pontiac for 50 years which he began February 1930. He operated out of his basement at his present residence and then moved to 307 W. Madison St. in 1937. He sold the business in December 1980.

He attended First United Methodist Church, was a charter member of the Lions Club, Pontiac, which he joined in 1939, and was presented a 50 year pin. He became deputy district govenor of Central Illinois District 1-B of Lions International on July 21, 1949.

He was a member of Livingston County Historical Society, serving three terms as president. He traced the history of the residents of Jones House, the oldest brick home in Pontiac, from the past to the present.

He did research on the Livingston County Courthouse and research on the history of Livingston County. He gave numerous talks on genealogy in North Central Illinois.

He was a member of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce and Pontiac Credit Bureau and was educated in Pontiac schools. Memorials may be made to the Livingston County Historical Society.

CHAPTER 12

1990 to 2020

Earl Asper Dies in 1991

F. Earl Asper and his wife, Thelma Asper, volunteered to help refurbish the Jones House during the restoration process. A copy of Earl's obituary is shown below.

July 23, 1991
Pantagraph

F. Earl Asper

PONTIAC — F. Earl Asper, 81, a resident of Evenglow Lodge, died at 5:50 a.m. yesterday (July 22, 1991). His funeral will be at 11 a.m. Wednesday at Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home, Pontiac, the Rev. Jack Travelstead officiating. Burial will be in South Side Cemetery, Pontiac. Visitation will be from 5 to 7 p.m. today.

He was born Aug. 15, 1909, at Pontiac, a son of Harry and Amelia Wagner Asper. He married Thelma Kelson on Nov. 29, 1934, at Pontiac. She survives. Also surviving are one daughter, Linda Gruber, McLean, Va.; one son, David, Inverness; two brothers, Clarence and Harley, both of Pontiac; one sister, Delores Kelson, Pontiac; and four grandchildren. He was preceded in death by one infant son and one brother.

Mr. Asper was educated in Pontiac area schools. He farmed for many years, retiring in 1979. He was a member of the First United Methodist Church of Pontiac, Pontiac Elks Lodge No. 1019, and he was past commander of the Pontiac chapter of the Knights Templar.

Memorials may be made to the First United Methodist Church or to the Livingston County Historical Society.

Auction Held in 1995 to Benefit the Jones House

The Pantagraph published a story about this fund raising effort.

> The Pantagraph
> October 11, 1995
>
> By: Susan Rittenhouse
>
> SOMETHING OLD: It buys something new at Jones House
> The garage, closets, and china cabinet have been searched and sorted, and I still can't find what I'm looking for. I'm in search of a valuable antique to give away.
>
> Yeah, I know, it sounds nuts. Why would I want to give away something worth money? Well, for a good cause.
>
> The Livingston County Historical Society is asking for donations of antiques, in good condition, for its antique auction this Sunday. Society members and the public are encouraged to donate those items they know are too good to throw away, but really don't have a place for or want anymore. Maybe someone inherited a vase or painting they always thought was ugly. Here is the perfect opportunity to get rid of it without feeling guilty.
>
> All auction proceeds benefit the historical society, which is planning to restore the historic Jones House's carriage house. And don't forget, all donations are tax deductible.
>
> My mom found her donation right away. "I'm giving that big crock bowl," she said.
>
> "What crock bowl? I don't remember what it looks like."
>
> "That's because it hasn't been out of the cupboard since 1977," she said.
> Now that's a good donation.
>
> So I've been asking myself, "What can I donate?" I've been wandering around the house, scrutinizing my possessions to see if anything qualifies. I don't have that many antiques to begin with. Do you think they'd take my Barbie dolls?
>
> My problem is I'm too emotionally attached to my stuff. Sure, I could donate my great-uncle's childhood ring, but since I wear it every day,

they'd have to cut my finger off first. Or I could contribute the antique glass turkeys I set out, every Thanksgiving. Ha, fat chance. I think I'm still paying for some of them.

No, the donation has to be something I don't really use. How about my blender, the stove or any one of my Teflon baking dishes? They're all in pristine condition (from lack of use) but, unfortunately, not old enough to be called antiques. And I suppose no one would want old record albums, especially Cheap Trick or the Bee Gees.

I may be having trouble finding a good contribution, but others aren't.
Some of the items already donated include a quilt, a hand-tied Oriental rug, a steamer trunk, a walnut chair, hand-painted dishes, antique tools and kitchen utensils, Livingston County legal papers and solid wood doors leftover from the restoration of the Jones House.

Other pieces are a cast-iron bathtub and wash basin, small pieces of furniture like end tables, a black Wedgewood teapot and pitcher, a glass milk pitcher and a vase, a Delft vase, fruit jars with glass tops, china and wooden lawn chairs. Hedge posts, used for landscaping, also will be up for bid.

The auction is not only a fund-raiser, but a way for the society to clean house. Many folks here in town give items to the society they believe are of historical value, and the vast majority of donations are used in displays.
In fact, the main reason for the restoration of the carriage house is to make room for a donation of large agricultural equipment the society recently received. The society loves its donations, but once in a while they get duplicates, or something they just can't use. Most of the auction's merchandise, however, is coming from the public.

If you have an item you'd like to contribute, contact Frank Sellmyer at 844-5044, Susan Myers at 844-5878 or Brenda Thompson at 844-3657. But you better hurry; there are only a few days left.

According to Bob Sear, vice president of the society, the event begins at 11 a.m. Sunday at the Jones House, 314 Madison St., and items will be on display at 10 a.m.

"We have more items coming in every day," according to Sear.

Auctioneers for Sunday's first-time event are Clint Conway and Bob Harty. Italian beef sandwiches will be made by Mike LoPiccalo, and pie will be sold by the slice.

The auction is sure to be a success, and the cause is a good one. Many people have donated some pieces. That steamer trunk sounds pretty interesting to me. Hey wait a minute, I'm supposed to be donating, not buying. Back to the closets in search of my donation. If you attend the event and see a Barbie and Ken doll camper with pop-out tent on the auction block, you'll know where it came from.

John Perring Gave Talk About the Jones House in 1996

The Pantagraph published a meeting notice for the Historical Society.

The Pantagraph
October 21, 1996

Pontiac

Jones House focus of next society meeting

The history and restoration of the Jones House will be the focus of the next Livingston County Historical Society meeting beginning at 7:30 p.m. Thursday at Pontiac City Hall, 115 W. Howard St.

John Perring will present the program. The Jones House, built in 1857 and 1858, is the oldest brick home in Pontiac and is owned and operated by the society as a museum.

Historical society membership is open to anyone interested in the history of Livingston County. Annual dues are $8. Guests are welcome at the meetings.

Thelma Asper Dies in 1996

Thelma and her husband helped on the refurbishment and decoration of the Jones House.

December 30, 1996
Pantagraph

Thelma M. Asper

PONTIAC -- The funeral for Thelma M. Asper, 84, of 215 E. Washington St., Pontiac, will be at 10:30 a.m. Tuesday at First United Methodist Church, Pontiac, the Rev. Donald Black officiating. Burial will be in South Side Cemetery.

Visitation will be from 5 to 7 p.m. today at Harris-Martin-Burke Funeral Home, Pontiac.

She died at 7:50 a.m. Saturday (Dec. 28, 1996) at her home. Memorials may be made to The Jones House: Evenglow Lodge; or to First United Methodist Church.

Survivors include one son, David Asper, Inverness; one daughter, Linda Gruber, McLean, Va.; and one sister, Ruth Schifflet, Gridley. Also surviving are four grandchildren, Jason Asper, Melinda Asper, Christopher Gruber, and Ingrid Gruber.

She was born Aug. 14, 1912 at Pontiac, the daughter of Edward M. and Ethel A. (Atkins) Kelson. She attended Pontiac area elementary schools and was a graduate of Cornell High School.

She married F. Earl Asper on Nov. 29. 1934 at Pontiac. He died July 22, 1991. She also was preceded in death by three brothers, and one sister in infancy.

She was a member of the Clionian Society: the Livingston County Historical Society — where she played an active role in establishing The Jones House; and a former member of both the Pontiac Women's Club and the White Shrine. She was past matron of the Eastern Star. Mrs. Asper and her husband lived and worked on a farm south of Pontiac for many years. She also was a co-partner of A&L Collectors Gallery in Pontiac. She was a member of the First United Methodist Church, Pontiac.

Ham & Bean Luncheons to Support the Jones House

The Historical Society started an annual ham & bean luncheon to raise money to support the Jones House renovation and ongoing maintenance. A notice for one of the luncheons was published in the 1998 Pantagraph.

These annual luncheons were continued for many years with the last one being held in 2019. The Society decided to discontinue this event after the Covid virus pandemic struck in March of 2020.

November 6, 1998
Pantagraph

Historical Society to hold luncheon

The Livingston County Historical Society will be holding its annual ham and bean luncheon from 11 a.m. to I p.m. Saturday at the First Lutheran Church.

The luncheon is a benefit for the Jones House and proceeds will go toward maintenance and upkeep of the home.

Built in 1858, the house, located at 314 E. Madison St., is the oldest brick house in Pontiac. It is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is owned by the historical society.

Tickets for the luncheon can be purchased from society members or at the door. Carry outs are available.

Jones House Restoration Completed and Tours in 1998

The Pantagraph published a story about the Jones House project.

November 28, 1998
Pantagraph

Two historic homes in Pontiac

The Jones House at 314 East Madison Street, is a classic example of Gothic Revival architecture. Built in 1857-58, it is the oldest brick home in Pontiac, and is named after Henry C. Jones, the man who owned the home the longest length of time.

His father Henry Jones, who was a county judge, built the oldest brick home in Pontiac in 1855-56. It was razed in 1989.

Henry C. Jones died in 1921. His wife, Mary, continued to live in the home until her death in 1942.

In September 1975, the building was seriously damaged by fire and was to be demolished. However, concerned members of the community came together and purchased the property in 1976.

In May 1978, the home was honored with the National Register of Historic Places Award.

Since that time much work has been done to preserve the Jones House. The work included: foundation repair, new roof, front entry porch, windows restored with reproductions of old glass and restoration of the chimneys. In the interior, ceilings were repaired, loose plaster removed and replace, floor and woodwork refinished and fireplaces were restored. Wallpaper was selected from documented prints.

The poured cement sidewalk was removed and replaced with a period brick sidewalk. As well, the carriage house has been restored.

The Catharine V. Yost Museum and Arts Center is a living museum and a local center for the nonperforming arts. The Yost House is open to the public.

The Yost House is a three-story, wood framed structure built for Z.F. Yost, a Pontiac attorney. Begun in 1898, this Queen Anne-style house rests on the north bank of the Vermilion River, providing a clear view of the river below and behind the house. Visitors enjoy that same scenery today, filtered through the many trees and shrubs which offer a haven for visiting song-birds and waterfowl.

It is significant the Twentieth Century has made little impact on the structure, inside or out. Here, nearly all the Yost family possessions remain, some of which date back to the 1850's, reminding visitors of the rich and varied cultural interests of its inhabitants.

Some of the special features of the home are a historic time capsule of genealogical and cultural significance; an original Victorian home occupied solely by the Yost family for 90 years; most of the original family furnishings and belongings remain in place, a
unique record of an earlier lifestyle and an entertaining guided tour.

The Jones House is open for tours on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. May through December. Suggested admission is Adults $1.00; Children under high school age 25 cents.

The Yost House is open on Sundays from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. or by appointment. Admission is $2.00. Group tours can be made by arrangement by calling 815-844-5847 or 1-800-835-2055.

Googerty and the Jones House

The Pantagraph published a story about Thomas Googerty. Some of Googerty's work is on display at the Jones House.

The Pantagraph
August 2, 1999

Master craftsman lived in relative obscurity

By: M. K. Guetersloh

PONTIAC — When Thomas Googerty died of a heart attack 54 years ago, his death as well as his life's achievements went relatively unnoticed by the Pontiac community. Googerty's obituary was fairly typical of the time with only a few of his achievements listed. And only a few people in the community knew that Googerty wrote the book — literally — on blacksmithing and ornamental iron work.

"He lived a recluse in his family's home," said Howard Miller, a former Pontiac resident whose family was well-acquainted with Googerty. "His death didn't make a big splash in Pontiac, and I think there was some astonishment after he died."

Miller characterized the typical response of Pontiac residents after Googerty's death as along the lines of "'What? You mean there was a nationally known artist in our midst?"

In 1911, Googerty published the instructional book, "Hand Forging and Wrought Iron Ornamental Work." In 1937, he authored another book, "Decorative Wrought Iron Work."

According to Miller, Googerty also published a third book and countless articles on iron working. Jim Wallace, director of the National Ornamental Metal Museum in Memphis, Tenn., said Googerty's work has influenced generations of blacksmiths. "He is without exception the one person who is the most important for all iron workers," Wallace said.

"He continues to teach blacksmiths through his books — which were actual textbooks I used when I was studying iron work in the 1960s. His texts are still used to teach blacksmithing to this day."

Googerty was born in Pontiac on Nov. 14, 1864. Miller said he remembers that Googerty was born to the second generation of an Irish immigrant family.

At 13 years old, Googerty left school and started work as a hired hand on a local farm. By 15, he was working as a blacksmith's helper at a Pontiac carriage shop. Eventually, he became a journeyman, practicing the blacksmithing trade as he moved from town to town.

According to his obituary, Googerty taught forge work for seven years at the Stout Institute of Menominee, Wis., and in 1915, he was named a master craftsman by the Boston Society of Craftsmen.

Starting in 1895, Googerty taught blacksmithing as a trade to the boys who were incarcerated at the Illinois Reform School, which later became the Pontiac Correctional Center. In 1914 and in 1921, his ornamental iron work earned him recognition by the Art Institute of Chicago.

In 1940, he joined a group of local painters, creating The Amitytown Society of Painters. Several of Googerty's landscapes are on display in Pontiac at the Jones House and the Catharine V. Yost Museum.

On Oct. 29, 1945, while on the job at the reform school, Googerty suffered a heart attack and later died at Saint James Hospital.

Googerty Wrought Iron Gates at Two Pontiac Cemeteries

He made the entrance gates at the Pontiac South Side Cemetery and St. Mary's Catholic Cemetery.

Googerty entrance gates at Pontiac's South Side Cemetery

A detail from the South Side Cemetery Gates

Googerty entrance gates at Pontiac's St. Mary's Cemetery

John Perring Dies in 2002

Mr. Perring was one of the principal people involved with the restoration of the Jones House.

The Pantagraph
September 2, 2002

John E. Perring

PONTIAC — The funeral of John E. Perring, 82, of Pontiac and Waynesville, will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at the Waynesville United Methodist Church, Waynesville, with the Rev. Al Simonson officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen John Cemetery, Waynesville.

Visitation will be from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at the Calvert Funeral Home, Clinton. A memorial service also will be at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Pontiac United Methodist Church, Pontiac, with the Rev. Dan Harry officiating. A fellowship time after the memorial service will be at the church.

Mr. Perring died at 2:58 p.m. Saturday (Aug. 31, 2002) at OSF St. Joseph Medical Center, Bloomington. Memorials may be made to the Livingston County Historical Society or the Waynesville United Methodist Church.

Mr. Perring was born April 4, 1920, in rural Waynesville/Wapella, a son of Allison E. and Margaret S. Cox Perring. He married Reva C. Finfrock on April 5, 1942, in Waynesville. She survives. Other survivors include one son, John L. (Betsy) Perring, Pontiac; a daughter, Carolee (Rolan Cohoon) Truitt, Farmer City; seven grandchildren, Michele Ash, Mansfield; Roxanne Huff, Farmer City; Alison Ruble, Broomfield, Ohio; Laura Godfrey, Ashworth, Ga.; Jill Papsdorf, Brooklyn, N.Y.; John Andrew Perring, Dunlap; and Emily Perring, Chicago; a step-granddaughter, Krista Voyles, Farmer City; four great-grand-children, Bradley, Brian and Bethany Ash and Julia Ruble; a step-grandson, Brian Dean Voyles; two brothers, Dale Perring, Leroy; and Al Perring, Clinton; and a sister, Hilda Lee, Waynesville.

He was preceded in death by a daughter, Diane Bogner; brothers Larry and William; and a step-grandson, Brian Cohoon.

Mr. Perring graduated from the University of Illinois with Bronze Tablet Honors in agriculture. He was an honorary I-Man for the U of I, a life member of the U of I Alumni Club, past president of the McLean County Alumni Association and was an event organizer for the university. He was

a life member of the Tribal Counsel of the U of I "I-Fund." He established the Cullom Fair while teaching agriculture at Cullom High School.
He retired as Senior Vice President, Trust Officer and Farm Manager for the Pontiac National Bank and designed the advertising campaign and logo still being used today.

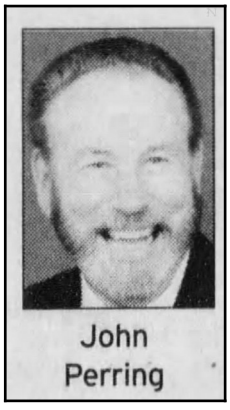
He was a past president of the Livingston County Historical Society, where he was instrumental in the preservation and restoration of the Jones House.

He was a long-standing supporter of the Livingston County Republican Party. He was an out-standing gardener and known for his rose garden, showing 85 varieties. Mr. Perring's road-side wildflowers in Waynesville were featured on the front page of The Pantagraph, and people drove miles out of the way to view them.

He was a past general sales manager at the corporate office for Cargill, Inc. in Minneapolis. He served as a VOCA Volunteer traveling to Hungary with Ralph Kloppenstein as a volunteer consultant in agriculture.

Mr. Perring researched genealogy and traced his family history back to 1600 as documented in his book "Axminster to America." He was awarded a soil conservation award for his work on his farm in rural Waynesville.

He was a member of the Pontiac and Clinton Elk's Lodges, Pontiac Moose Lodge and the Pontiac Lion's Club. He was a past member of the Livingston County Mental Health Board and past member of the Pontiac Chamber of Commerce. Mr. Perring was a guest columnist and wrote editorials for The Pantagraph. He had not missed a home football game at the University of Illinois in 35 years. He continually gave of his time and talent to his family and his community. He was loved and will be greatly missed.



John Perring

Jones House Renter Dies in 2002

Many people lived at the Jones House when it was divided into apartments. The obituary for Edith Robbins, one of the people who lived at the Jones House is shown below.

The Pantagraph
2002

Ann Robbins

PAXTON — The funeral for Edith Ann Robbins, 71, of Paxton, formerly of Pontiac, will be at 10 a.m. Friday at Harris-Martin-Burke Funeral Home, Pontiac, with the Rev. Bob Ryder officiating. Burial will be in Memorial Park Cemetery Pontiac. Visitation will be 4 to 8 p.m. today at the funeral home.

She died at 4:05 p.m. Tuesday (Oct. 8, 2002) at BroMenn Regional Medical Center, Normal.

Memorials may be made to the hospice program at St. James-John W. Albrecht Medical Center in Pontiac, or the Jones House in care of the Livingston County Historical Society.

Edith Ann Ferguson was born Jan. 27, 1931, in rural Cropsey, a daughter of Millard. and Lillie Van Walker Ferguson. She married Earl "Scotty" Robbins on June 11, 1949, in Pontiac. He died Oct. 13, 1974.

Survivors include two daughters, Lynn Ann (Bill) Ingold, Paxton; and Pamela (Mark) Lewis, Normal; a son, Charles (Melissa) Robbins, Paxton; seven grandchildren; one great-granddaughter; five sisters, Gerre Reyniers and Margie Loughran, both of Pontiac; Wilma Dehm and Patricia Hornickel, both of Chatsworth; and Mariruth Therien, Lexington; and a brother, Dud Ferguson, Pontiac.

She was preceded in death by her parents, five brothers and two sisters.

Early during their marriage, the couple resided in an apartment at the Jones House on Madison Street in Pontiac. The historical home is the oldest brick residence in Livingston County and has been restored by the Livingston County Historical Society.

Mrs. John Perring Dies in 2005

Mrs. Perring was a volunteer at the Jones House. Her obituary appeared in the 2005 Pantagraph.

The Pantagraph
May 8, 2005

Reva C. Perring

PONTIAC — Reva C. Perring, 83, of Pontiac died at 1:20 a.m. Saturday (May 7, 2005) at Even-glow Lodge, Pontiac. Her funeral will be at 10:30 a.m. Wednesday at Waynesville United Methodist Church, the Rev. Nadine Preston officiating. Burial will be in Evergreen Cemetery, Waynesville. Friends may call from 5 to 8 p.m. Tuesday at Calvert Funeral Home, Clinton.

The family will receive friends from 5 to 7 p.m. Thursday at Pontiac United Methodist Church activity room.

Memorials may be made to Livingston County Historical Society or Waynesville United Methodist Church.

Mrs. Perring was born Aug. 7, 1921, at Waynesville, the daughter of Lester and Edna Klemm Finfrock. She married John E. Perring on April 5, 1942, at Waynesville. He passed away Aug. 31, 2002. Survivors include a son, John L. (Betsy) Perring, Pontiac; a daughter, Carolee (Rolan Cohoon) Truitt, Farmer City; eight grandchildren, Michele Ash, Mansfield; Roxanne Huff, Farmer City; Alison Ruble, Westminister, Colo.; Laura Godfrey, Actworth, Ga.; Jill Paps-dorf, Brooklyn, N.Y.; John An-drew Perring, Dunlap; Emily Perring-Hauptmann, Chicago; and Shanelle Perring, Pontiac; one step-grand-daughter, Krista Voyles, Farmer City; and 11 great-grandchildren. She was preceded in death by her parents and one daughter, Diane Bogner.

Mrs. Perring was a member of Waynesville United Methodist Church. She was a graduate of ISU with a degree in English. Twenty-five years later she received a degree from ISU in elementary and special education. She was a special education teacher in the Pontiac School District and retired after 20 years of service.

She was a member of the D.A.R. Pontiac Women's Club; Clionians; Clinton Elks Lodge; Retired Teachers Association; St. James Hospital Auxiliary; and the Livingston County Historical Society. She was a volunteer at Jones House,

Evenglow Lodge and St. James Hospital gift shop. She shared her husband's enthusiasm for U of I athletics and was a member of the I. Fund. She helped her husband in his research for his book on the history of the Perring family. She was also involved in Special Olympics.

Porch Floors Replaced at Jones House Circa 2013

One problem with wood floors on exterior porches that are exposed to the elements is that they eventually rot away.

Sometime around 2013, the wood floors on all three porches of the Jones House were replaced with a modern man-made material. These new porch floors should last many years longer than the original wood floors.

Googerty Painting and the Jones House in 2019

The Pantagraph published this article about Thomas Googerty in 2019.

> The Pantagraph
> August 23, 2019
>
> **Love, history, memories — all framed up**
>
> By: Susan Hazlett
>
> This is a story of art, history and love, all wrapped up in a single afternoon.
>
> It starts many years ago with my family's beloved Aunt Josie and Uncle Harrison, a wonderful couple who lived their entire lives in Pontiac. They had a large group of friends, one of whom was Thomas Googerty, a nationally renowned iron-worker and artist.
>
> Googerty, who died in 1945 at age 80, was considered one of the country's leading designers of decorative wrought iron.
>
> According to newspaper accounts, he was "a prolific producer of everything imaginable that could be made from iron including ornamental grilles, lamps, intricate locks, door knockers, latches, coat hooks," and more.
>
> His works were exhibited all over the U.S. including the Chicago Art Institute where he was awarded prizes in 1914 and 1921.
>
> Some of Googerty's metal masterpieces can still be found in Pontiac including the gates at South Side Cemetery, the collection box at St. Mary's Church and the fireplace grate at the Jones House (Pontiac's oldest brick home and now a museum).
>
> But Googerty also painted. Nearly a century ago, he and a Pontiac dentist, Thomas Lockie, spent Thursday and Sunday afternoons painting along the Vermilion River near Cornell. Together, in 1940, they founded the locally famous Amitytown Society of Painters.
>
> Googerty's paintings, like his iron-work, were delicate and beautiful in detail. The artist was a devout Catholic, and I suppose that's how Josie got to know him. But however they connected, over the years, she and Harrison acquired three Googerty paintings, all landscapes, and a painting by Dr. Lockie.

Hanging on the walls of their apartment, the artwork fit in perfectly. The overall effect was soothing and comforting. Just like my aunt and uncle.

After Harrison's death, Josie allowed my parents and me to each select one painting and then donated the largest piece to the Livingston County Historical Society. I don't know the fate of the fourth painting.

That was 20 years ago. Fast forward to this past weekend.

Lately, my mom and I have been talking a lot about family history. It's getting harder for her to remember all the details so I am eager to capture and preserve as many memories as possible.

We dug out old photo albums of our aunt and uncle, and in the background of a few blurry photos, I spotted the paintings. That got me thinking.

I vaguely recalled the donated artwork was kept on display at the Jones House, but I wasn't sure. As luck would have it, the museum was open last Saturday in conjunction with an art exhibition.

Would Josie's donation be there? We wanted to see it again and cement the image in our minds one more time. So, we made a special trip to the Jones House.

When we walked in, there in the front room was the painting I knew so well. A wave of relief and happiness swept over me. My stepfather nodded and smiled. We hoped my mother, after all these years, would recognize the piece.

She studied the large canvas and its images of lovely green, blue and brown trees and gentle rolling hills.

"I know this painting," she said. Then she turned to us and laughed, "Josie!"

It was a priceless moment. Surely our departed loved ones were there with us in spirit.

After viewing the other Googerty works on display, we thanked the docent and headed down the cobblestone sidewalk.

At the premiere exhibit of the Amitytown Society of Painters in 1940, the artists quoted Sir Joshua Reynolds. "A room hung with pictures," they said, "is a room hung with thoughts."

Yes, a room hung with thoughts... and a lot of love.

Tree Planted in 2019 for Long-time Docent of the Jones House

The Pantagraph published this story about a tree that was planted in the backyard of the Jones House.

November 4, 2019
The Pantagraph

Beech tree honors longtime docent

PONTIAC — The Livingston County Historical Society has dedicated a purple weeping beech tree in the backyard of the Jones House in memory of long-time historical society member Lorraine Sellmyer.

Sellmyer, who died last year at age 98, was a docent at the Jones House and worked on the garden since the historical society acquired it in 1977.

The purple weeping beech tree would have been available when the house was built in 1857.

Long-Times Jones House Docent Brenda Thompson Honored in 2021

Brenda Thompson has been a docent for the Jones House for many years. In 2020, Brenda was recognized as the Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the year. The Leader published the story below about Brenda's award.

March 12, 2020

Pontiac Daily Leader

Thompson is Volunteer of the Year

Erich Murphy/Managing Editor

There are only so many hours in the day and so many in the week, however Brenda Thompson has found a way to make sure she utilizes all she can in helping others around Pontiac. It's the extended involvement in so many activities that has led to Thompson being named the Pontiac Area Chamber of Commerce Volunteer of the Year.

Thompson was certainly surprised when she came around the corner at Mosaic's office Thursday afternoon as she saw a small crowd of well-wishers and friends who knew the surprise she was about to learn from Cathy Coppinger, executive director at the Chamber.

"People nominate you and sing your praises about how important you are to this community and the people that you touch," Coppinger said to Thompson in making the announcement. "We want to honor you as our Volunteer of the Year."

Thompson said her first reaction was shock. It was evident on her face that this honor was quite a pleasant surprise.

After having time to let the announcement sink in, Thompson said her feelings included, "the realization of so many people that I care about cared back and they're letting me know they appreciate what I have done.

"I cannot believe that they did this, this is overwhelming. I really do appreciate all of those people."

Mosaic is just one of the stops on Thompson's busy schedule. She is an ambassador for Mosaic and serves on the Community Advisory Committee and does a lot with Mosaic from reading to "anyone who wants to listen" to serving as the welcome speaker at Discover the Possibilities luncheons.

Relay for Life activity has a personal touch for her and she's a member of Suzie's Brainstormers team. There is also being involved with church

activity at the First United Methodist Church in Pontiac. Rev. Tom Goodell was one of those who nominated Thompson.

There is also work with the Livingston County Historical Society, the Jones House, the Art Center and the retired teachers group.

“A lot of people have told me I do too many things, but I have made lists and gone over them and tried to find what's really bad about the things I'm doing,” Thompson said. “I can't find things that are really bad about the things I'm doing so I keep doing them.”

“There are certain days where I do certain things. Thursday is my church day and I work on Sunday School lessons there. There are Mondays where I do Relay meetings. You find time for things that are important to you,” Thompson added.

Finding time for things like Mosaic, it's whenever Shelly or someone here calls and says we have a project going on, and then I re-adjust the schedule. Historical Society means I run a second house, so when I get done with my house, I go over to the Jones House and take care of it.

I just do enjoy what I do. I want to do these things.”

Coppinger said that nominations were sent out and that her name “popped up the most for Volunteer of the Year.”

The things people said about her, about how giving she is of her time and how dedicated she is, how many communities she actually serves, how many committees she serves on, and what a big part of Relay for Life and church, there was no doubt that she was the one,” Coppinger said.

“She's a retired teacher and it seems retired teachers get a bug, when they retire they have to find something else to do. She's called to service.”

Service to others is her post-career calling. And those she interacts with are her family.

“All the people I work with in the different groups, they're like another family,” Thompson said.

“When I see the people at Mosaic being able to do things they enjoy, that makes my work with Mosaic important. When I work on things at the Jones House and people come through and want to know more, it makes me feel good to be able to share history. With Relay for Life, it touches me very much. I'm a survivor, I've got lots of friends who are survivors, I've lost friends because of cancer. I want to work and help raise money for more research.”

Thompson will be honored, along with other Chamber award recipients at the annual meeting and banquet on March 31.

CHAPTER 13

2021 Repair of Back Yard Brick Fence

Repair of Broken Brick Wall in 2021

In the Spring of 2021, Pontiac experienced some high winds. These winds split a large tree growing just south of the south brick wall on the Jones House. One-half of the tree fell down, and it pushed about a twelve foot wide section of the brick wall in the backyard of the Jones House.

The photo below shows the condition of the wall after the City of Pontiac crew sawed up and removed the large fallen tree branch.

The author and his grandson, Caleb Charles Maley, cleaned up and removed all the debris. We saved about 90% of the original bricks by carefully removing the old mortar from them.

Good Help on Repairing the Brick Fence

The author's grandson, Caleb Charles Maley, helped to stack the bricks after the author removed the old mortar.

An eight inch high concrete layer was poured at the bottom of the broken brick wall. The old bricks were then installed on top of this new concrete foundation. Other old bricks, similar in color to the existing wall bricks, stacked next to the carriage house, were used to replace the old bricks that had broken.

The repaired brick wall is shown in the photo below.

For more specific details on the repair of this broken brick wall, see the presentation at https://tinyurl.com/wssvtezs.

CHAPTER 14

2022 Carriage House Painting

Jones House Maintenance in 2022

The author painted the carriage house located south of the Jones House.

The first story of the carriage house is made of decorative concrete blocks. The second story exterior sheeting is unique. This sheeting is stamped tin panels which look like decorative concrete block.

All of the white trim was painted with two coats of semi-gloss exterior latex house paint. The upper stamped tin panels were painted with the same color of red that was used to recently repaint the Strevell house at 401 W. Livingston Street in Pontiac.

The original Jones House used fireplaces to heat the home. Sometime after the house was first constructed, the owners decided to dig a small basement and use a coal burning furnace to heat the home.

Most houses that burned coal had a window or coal chute built into the foundation of the house. Because the brick walls extended all the way down to the ground level, it would have been difficult to cut an opening in the exterior brick wall.

The decision was made to utilize and exterior coal chute. A hold was made in the stacked rock foundation about three feet wide and five feet high. An exterior coal chute was then dug at the northeast corner of the house. The exterior coal chute walls were lined with bricks walls.

When the house was refurbished in the late 1970s, a piece of plywood was used to cover up the opening in the stacked rock foundation.

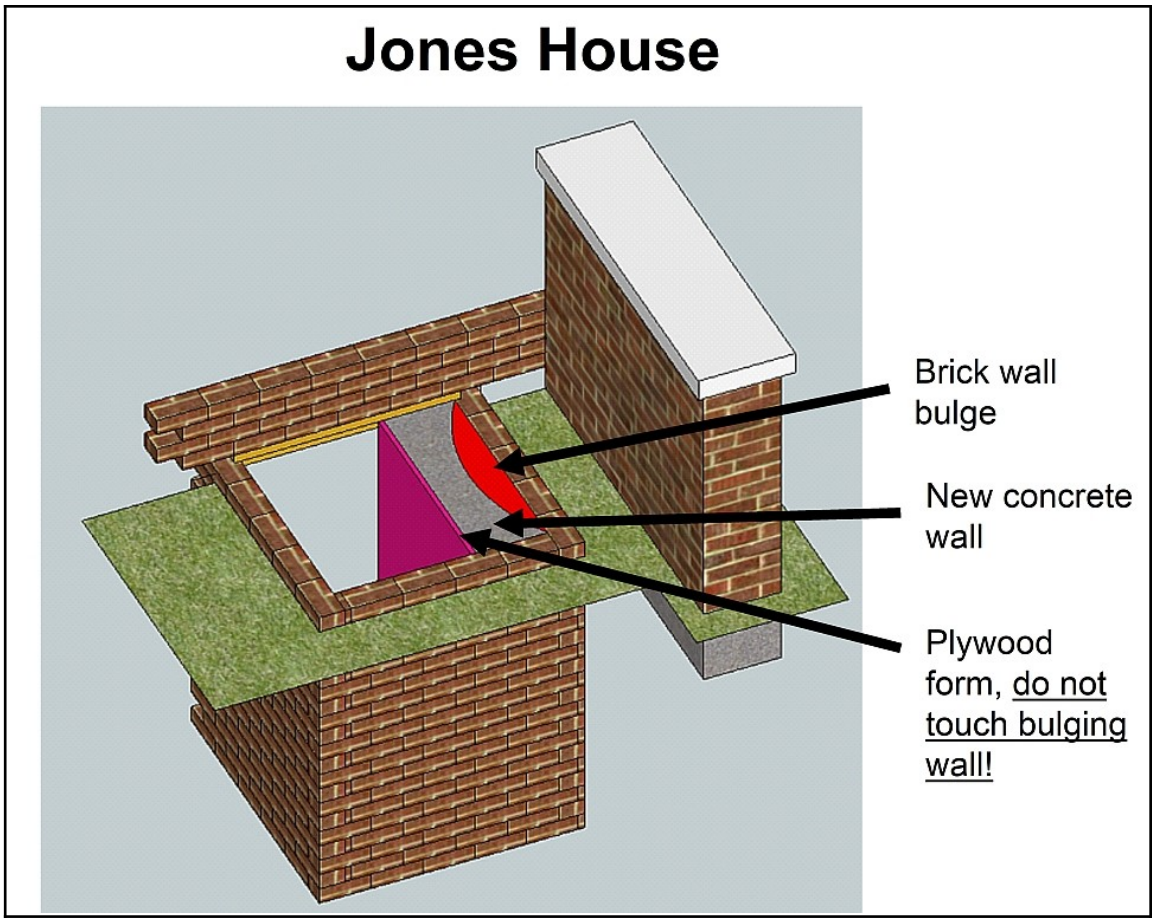
Circa 1978, a brick wall was built as a border for the backyard of the Jones House. The northeast portion of the wall was constructed within ten inches of the north brick wall of the exterior coal chute. This brick wall weighed approximately 2,000 pounds.

For over 40 years after the brick wall was built, the heavy portion of brick wall pushed downwards on the soil next to the exterior coal chute. In 2022, it was discovered that the north wall of the coal chute was extremely bowed and was ready to “blow out” into the exterior coal chute.

To prevent collapse of the exterior coal chute, the decision was made to repair the exterior coal chute. The first step was to clean out about 18 inches of debris which had collected in the coal chute over the years. Once the debris was removed, coal was found a the bottom of the chute hole. The coal particles were relatively small in size. Some of the coal found was saved and is shown below.

Pieces of coal found at the bottom of the exterior coal chute during repairs done in 2022.

After the exterior coal chute was cleaned, the next step was to pour a new concrete wall next to the bowed north brick wall of the exterior coal chute.

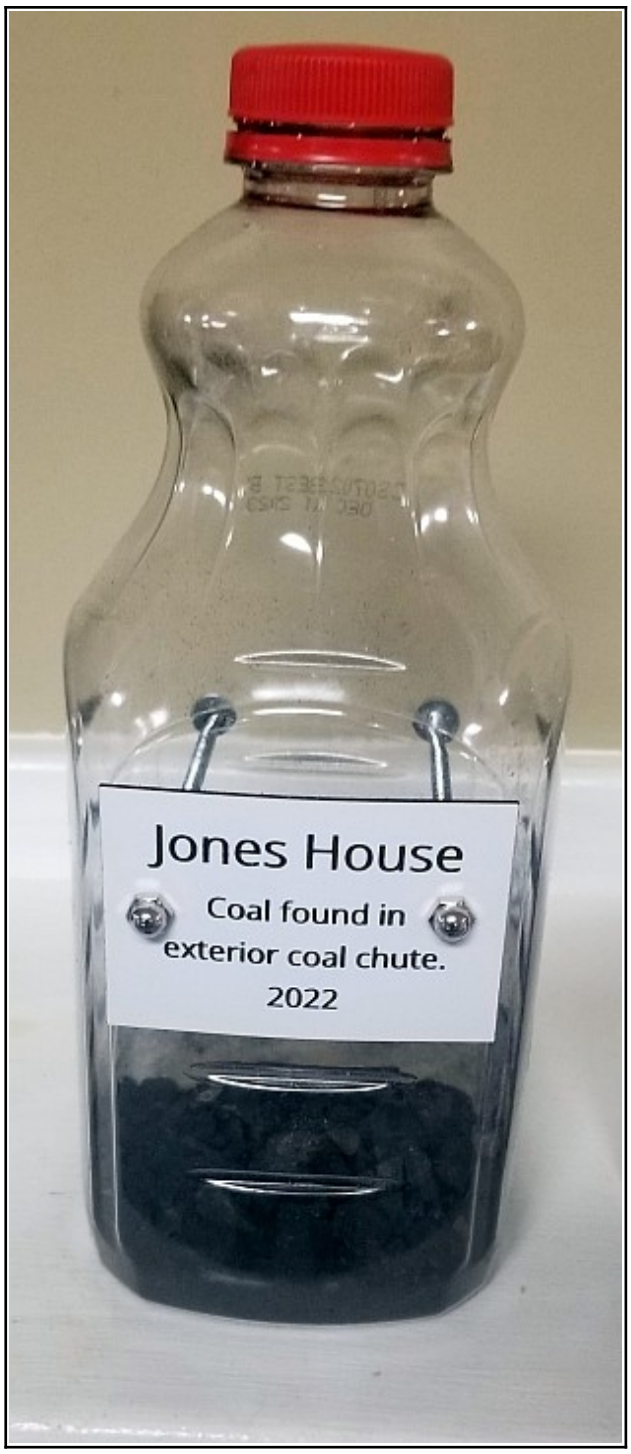


The opening cut into the stacked rock foundation was then closed using a concrete footing and new concrete blocks. An additional new concrete wall was poured into the exterior coal chute to prevent the first new concrete wall from moving.

For more specific details about painting the carriage house and repairing the coal chute, refer to the presentation stored at https://tinyurl.com/bdf5mnfs.

Displaying Coal Found in External Coal Chute in 2022

The author designed and built the display below. Many younger people have never seen coal before. Visitors to the Jones House can see some of the coal that was burned to heat the house.



CHAPTER 15

2023 Painting Exterior White Trim

Installation of the Asper Plaque on the Iron Gates in 2023

Both F. Earl Asper and his wife, Thelma Asper, were both volunteers and supporters of the Jones House renovation project. They donated money and selected the iron gates that are just east of the Jones House in the backyard brick wall.

In early 2023, descendants of Mr. and Mrs. Asper request that a plaque be mounted on the brick wall next to the iron gates. They selected and purchased the plaque. The author installed this plaque in the Summer of 2023.

Painting the White Trim on the Exterior of the Jones House in 2023

Many areas of the white exterior trim had started to peel by the Summer of 2023. The date when the trim was last painted is unknown.

Chunks of glazing had fallen out of sections in various windows. New glazing material was installed in these areas. Two coats of white exterior semi-gloss latex house paint were used on all windows, soffits, and the exterior kitchen walls.

The photo below shows the condition of the small arched window above the kitchen on the south side of the house.

Before Painting

After Painting

To paint the windows and trim above the north and south porches, a stepladder was lifted to these porch flat roofs using an aluminum extension ladder. A man-lift was rented for 12 hours to paint the soffits and facia boards that could not be reached from the porches.

The photo below shows the condition of the house after the painting of all white trim was completed.

Looking south at the Jones House after the white trim was painted in the Summer of 2023.

Looking northeast at the rear of the Jones House after the exterior trim was painted in the Summer of 2023.

Looking southwest at the east side of the Jones House after the trim was painted in the Summer of 2023.

CHAPTER 16

2023 Docent's Guide and Listing of House Artifacts

Prior to this book being written, the docents at the Jones House who give public tours utilized a document which contains the basic history of the house. This guide also lists most of the artifacts which are in the Jones House.

Unfortunately, the identity of the original author who did the research and wrote this document is unknown at this time.

Although there are a few subtle differences between this docent guide and the author's research results contained in this book, these differences do not significantly change the general story of the Jones House and its occupants. The Historical Society will review the existing docent guide and determine if any updates are needed to the guide.

It is evident from reviewing the list of artifacts in the house that it was a community effort to find and donate historical items needed to furnish the house.

A copy of this guide is shown below.

JONES HOUSE TOUR INFORMATION/SCRIPT

The Jones House is a unique pre-civil war house owned by the Livingston County Historical Society. The house is the oldest brick home in Pontiac and features a steep roof with gables and pointed second story windows which classify it as Gothic Revival Style. Our restoration architect believes the house was built from plans by Andrew Jackson Downing in his book "The Architecture of Country Homes" which was published in 1850.

The house was built in 1857 by John Dehner, one of Pontiac's early merchants. Mr. Dehner immigrated to the United States from Prussia. He married Jane of Virginia. They moved to Indiana where their son Joseph was born. The Dehner's moved to Pontiac close to the time that Pontiac was incorporated as a Village on February 12, 1856.

Mr. Dehner purchased two lots in the 300 block of East Madison Street in October 1857 for $500. Lot 1 was vacant, while Lot 2 already had a small two room wooden house on it. Mr. Dehner constructed a brick addition to the front of the small house with wood shingles cut from the woods where the American Legion Billet is along the Vermillion River. The two structures were then connected with a doorway. This brick house was finished in 1858. It is possible the family lived in the small wooded home while the brick portion was being built.

Mr. Dehner and a business partner, Job Dye, bought a building on the west side of the square in 1857 and they operated a dry goods store there. The next year Mr. Dye ended the partnership and Mr. Dehner bought him out. Joseph then worked in the store with his father. Joseph married in 1859 and bought the lot next to his parents in 1862. Mr. Dehner bought more property and the family soon owned three fourths of the block. They then had room for a stable to store a carriage and house horses. They also had room for a shed for gardening tools and grazing land for horses and perhaps some chickens. Mr. Dehner became a partner in the Chicago and Paducah Rail Road. He was also a partner in the first coal mine in Pontiac in 1866. Mr. Dehner was also active in politics. He served as President of the Village of Pontiac in 1866, 1869, and in 1870. In 1871 Mr. Dehner completed a six foot wide and 240 foot long brick sidewalk in front of the property.

In 1875 Mr. Dehner met with financial issues and he lost his business and his home. The family moved to St. Louis. The property was sold at public auction on December 16 of 1875 for $2,854.52. That best bid was by Mary P. Rose, Edgar B., and Charles Camp. In May 1883 Phillip Arman bought Lots 1 and 2 from members of the Camp family. There is a building on the East side of the square with the name Arman and the year 1898 at the top.

Henry C. Jones was one of seven children of Mr. Henry Jones of Ohio and Emily DeMoss Jones of Indiana. Mr. Jones moved to Cicero, Indiana where he worked in a mercantile. It was in Cicero that he met and married Emily. The DeMoss family moved to Livingston County about 1840 shortly after Henry C. was born. Mr. Jones moved his family to Livingston County in 1843 for a short time before moving on to the Iowa Territory. In 1847 the family moved back to Livingston County.

Two years later when Henry C. was eleven, Mr. Jones joined the "49ers" heading to California to look for gold. Emily and the children moved in with her parents in Avoca Township. During the two years that Mr. Jones was gone, Henry C. cut timber east of Pontiac near the home of his Aunt and Uncle, Martha and Phillip Rollins (or Rollings as Phillip signed his name). Martha, Emily's sister, and Phillip were early settlers along what is now known as Billet Road.

Mr. Jones returned to Pontiac in 1855 and purchased a lot at 315 W. Howard Street. During the next year he and his partner Mr. Edwin C. Jones erected the first brick structure in the county, one year before Mr. Dehner built his brick home. There was already a printing business in a small building on a portion of the lot. This may be where Henry C. developed a liking for the printing trade while he visited with the men working there.

Mr. Jones bought out his partner in 1857 and it is thought that Henry C. became a clerk in his father's store. Joseph Dehner and Henry C. most likely knew each other as they were close in age and were both involved in their fathers' businesses. The Dehner business was the more prosperous of the two at that time.

Like Mr. Dehner, Mr. Jones became active in local government and served as Temporary President of the Village of Pontiac in 1856. Then in 1857 he was elected to position of County Judge, even though he was not an attorney.

Shortly after Henry C.'s 21st birthday in 1859, he and his father traveled by ox team to Shasta, California to set up a store to sell needed items to the miners in the area. A year later the property on Howard Street was sold to settle the mortgage and Emily joined her husband and son in Shasta.

Henry C. enlisted in the Volunteer Service in 1864 and was elected Lieutenant of his Company. When the Regulars went to the front and the Volunteers were put in barracks, Henry C. resigned. He then traveled via steamship to Nicaragua, and then on another ship to New York with the hope of enlisting there to see some active service. The war was over by the time he arrived in New York, so he headed back to Pontiac. Four years later he had word that his mother had died.

Henry C., a Republican, and his brother-in-law, Mark Renoe, a Democrat, were engaged in the newspaper business for a while after his return. Mark was married to Henry C.'s sister Elisa. Renoe owned "The Free Press". Together the men bought "The Sentinel", the oldest paper in the county. The two papers were consolidated into "The Sentinel and Press". Renoe left the partnership and the paper became known as "The Sentinel" and Henry C. continued publication for 9 years making it the leading Republican paper in the county.

On September 23, 1872 Henry C., 34 years of age, married Mary A. Bancroft on her 20th birthday. Mary's mother had died when she was five. Her father, Luther, remarried and moved the family from New York to Livingston County in 1861. Luther bought ten acres of timberland about one and a half miles East of Pontiac and cleared land to plant an orchard of fruit trees.

Henry C. and Mary had a daughter, Helen M. born July, 1873. She died August, 1874 and was buried in the Jones Family plot in Pontiac City Cemetery.

Mary's health was failing, so Henry C. sold the newspaper and moved to Dallas, Texas where he again became involved in the newspaper

publishing business. Mary's health continued to be a concern. Henry C. sold this business and moved to Santa Cruz, California where he became involved in prune ranching.

Early in 1886 Henry C. and Mary adopted a baby who had been born December 25, 1885. They named her Nelle J.

The Henry C. Jones family returned to Pontiac in 1893, the same year that Henry C.'s father died. In August of that same year Henry C. was instrumental in having the local electric light company incorporated. He held a majority interest in the company. For seven years he was the President of Pontiac Light, Heat, and Power Company. The heat was exhaust steam referred to as "city heat". It was carried in underground pipes to business sections in town. Eventually he sold his interest in the operation.

In 1899 Henry C. and Mary bought the home previously owned by the Dehner family. Henry C. got pneumonia in June of 1921 at age 83. He was ill for less than a week when he died at home at 10:00 am on Monday, June 13. The Free Masons were in charge of funeral arrangements which included burial at the City Cemetery.

Mary Adella Bancroft Jones lived in the house another twenty one years. She died at age 90 on Tuesday, September 7, 1942 after an illness of several years. Her funeral was handled by the Raleigh J. Harris Funeral Home with burial in South Side Cemetary.

The house then passed to Nelle J. Jones Hershey and her husband, Rev. Roy G. Hershey. They continued to live in the house until Nelle's death on May 26, 1944. The property passed to Rev. Hershey. On his death in 1955 it went to his protege, Gerald Maxwell, who sold it to John and Naomi Koehler in November 1957.

The Koehlers then converted the house into three apartments by adding some areas to the back of the house. A fire damaged the house in 1975. A few months later the prospect of demolition seemed to be likely. Through the concern of two Livingston Historical Society members, Reid Tombaugh and Francis E. Lehman, the property was saved from demolition because they purchased it on May 21, 1976.

The Society acquired the property on June 3, 1976 through a grant from the Humiston Trust which deeded the property to the Society. After that a twelve year restoration project began which was directed by John Perring. The house was placed on the National Register of Historic Places in May, 1978. That was the first National Registry listing in Livingston County.

Most of the flooring and woodwork and about half of the plaster is original. The windows are reproduction. The wall paper is authentic reproduction selected from documented Victorian prints. The curtains are reproductions of lace curtains of the period. The original decorations and furnishing were done under the supervision of Mary Dievendorf, Thelma Asper, and Carl Apt.

In the second phase of restoration, under the direction of restoration architect, Les Kenyon of Peoria, the one story frame building that preceded the brick structure was completed.

The West Parlor

ITEMS PURCHASED BY THE SOCIETY:

1848 Rosewood Melodeon-Five Octave (Cabart & Needham & Co.) was purchased from Mr. Apt in 1992.

Two walnut ladies Bustle Chairs in blue with pink flowers purchased with Memorial Funds for Thelma Asper from Mr. Apt.

ITEMS GIVEN TO THE SOCIETY:

Given by Dr. Wilbur Shankland, St. Louis. He is a descendant of the Col. Morse family of Odell. Col. Morse is descended from Samuel B. Morse:

Medallion back, hand carved walnut love seat circa 1850-1860. Two matching balloon back side chairs.

Given by Blossom Lowenthal and Thelma Asper:

Victorian mirrored sconce.

Given by Sarah Mullaney in 2008:

Black spinning wheel that belonged to her grandmother; it came from Norway to the U.S. in the 1870's.

Donated by Past President's Club Woman's Club from Saunemin, Chatsworth, Emington in 1988.

Table Chair.

Given by Thelma Asper:

Pink Lamp on Melodeon.

Given by Francis Smith Family:

Fireplace screen made by Tom Googerty for the Smith Family; hence the "S".

Landscape painting in handmade frame both by Thomas Googerty.

Thomas Googerty was considered one of the outstanding craftsmen and designers of decorative wrought iron in the United States. He was born in Pontiac on November 14, 1864. He lived on North Division Street. When he was 13 he left the fourth grade to do farm work and odd jobs around town. Thomas became a blacksmith's helper in a carriage shop when he was 15. He earned twenty five cents a day for ten hour work days. He continued in the blacksmith trade in Pontiac and other cities for a number of years. He also worked as a locksmith and studied drawing and decorative design. He hammered iron and learned how to form it into delicate designs. He also worked with silver, brass, and copper. Thomas painted landscapes, did some wood carving, and made some wooden frames for some of his paintings.

The iron works of Thomas Googerty were on exhibit in many major cities including New York, Boston, Washington, St. Louis, and Chicago. In 1914 and 1921 his exhibits in the Art Institute of Chicago were awarded prizes. In 1915 he was promoted to the grade of master craftsman in the Boston Society of Arts and Crafts.

He made ornamental grilles, lamps, intricate locks, door knockers, door pulls, latches, hinges, coat hooks, andirons, fire tools, candlesticks, gates, and poor boxes.

Thomas became a teacher when he lost the feel of the hammer and could no longer create his own works. He volunteered to take a class of from six to twelve young blacksmiths at the Pontiac Reformatory. His plan was to teach them the rudiments of the craft. His graduates left the reformatory with experience and capabilities that could earn them jobs and help them build new lives. He was proud of the fact that none of his graduates ever returned to the reformatory. Thomas taught forge and wrought iron work at the Pontiac State Penitentiary for more than thirty years. He also taught at a summer school of the Stout Institute in Menomonie, WI for seven years.

Thomas wrote articles and books on the subject of wrought iron work. One titled "Hand Forging and Wrought Iron Ornamental Work" was used as a text book in vocational schools.

Many of Thomas Googerty's pieces of work are at the Chicago Art Institute. We are lucky to have a few in this house. The gates at the South Side Cemetery are also his work.

Thomas Googerty and his friend Dr. Thomas Lockie, local dentist and artist, were the founders of the Amitytown Society of Painters. This was a group of local artists who gathered to paint together on Thursday and Saturday afternoons for several summers. The group met along the river in Cornell on the Lyle Husted farm two miles south of town. There was an abandoned house there on the site of an old mill. This was in the area of the old town of Amity which was begun just south of Cornell. Amity did not prosper and eventually disappeared while Cornell continued on. The purpose of the Society was to develop young artists and to arouse interest and appreciation for art. Forty-three paintings were exhibited at the first Amitytown art show November 2526, 1940. The show was in the Y.M.C.A.

Thomas Googerty died at age 80 in 1944. The Amitytown Society of Painters disbanded in the 1980's.

KITCHEN

The kitchen was reconstructed in 1989 after a professor from ISU and his students helped find the foundations of the original room which had been destroyed in the 1975 fire.

ITEMS PURCHASED BY THE SOCIETY:

Purchased in Cedarburg, Wisconsin:

Harvest table

Purchased from Mr. Carl Apt in 1992:

dry sink and bakers cabinet

Stove

ITEMS GIVEN TO THE SOCIETY:

Gift from Mrs. Ethel Wagner, Collegeville, Pennsylvania:

Spinning Wheel which came in a covered wagon with the Wagner family from Pennsylvania to a farm south of Pontiac.

Gift from Mrs. Earl (Thelma) Asper:

Teakettle.

Gift from Mrs. Helen Wolff in memory of Robert Arnold Schlosser:

Spice cabinet.

Gift from Dr. & Mrs. Otis Law, FL:

Cookie molds and pewter pudding molds.

Gift from Mrs. Harold Berry:

Mammy's bench.

Gift from Estate of Margery Marten, Odell, Illinois:

Wooden mortar and pestle.

Gift from Evenglow Lodge:

Kitchen sink.

Items on dry sink on loan from Society members.

EAST ROOM/DINING ROOM

ITEMS PURCHASED BY THE SOCIETY:

Purchased from Mr. Carl Apt in 1992:

Three light kerosene chandelier- circa 1870.

Walnut five legged table, extents to 8 feet.

A cane bottom (bustle) chair with burled inset.

ITEMS GIVEN TO THE SOCIETY:

Purchased from Mr. Apt in 1994 by Marvene Howes Bonnet of Lafayett, LA, and donated to the Society in honor of her grandparents, The Nathan Thomas Greenes who had a farm south of Pontiac:

Walnut slant top desk with the glass front bookcase above, six captain drawers and three large drawers in base; two pieces with ornate crown, circa 1950.

Memorial Gift from Estate of Margery Martin, Odell, Illinois:

Three matching walnut cane seat dining room chairs.

Memorial Gift from Gail Brannon:

Small cup with JGW (Jersey G. Whitson).

Memorial Gift from Mrs. James (Mary) Scouller:

Table lamp handmade by Thomas Googerty.

Memorial Gift from Mrs. Thelma Asper:

Picture on South wall.

Memorial Gift from Robert Dievendorf:

Picture on North wall of A. Lincoln Family, Currier & Ives.

Memorial Gift from John Perring:

Walnut framed mirror on North wall, circa 1880.

Memorial Gift from Don Druin:

Gone with the Wind table lamp.

Memorial Gift from Mr. and Mrs. John Perring:

Fireplace screen from the Williams Family home on W. Water St.

Memorial Gift from Grant McCormack family, SE of Pontiac:

Arrowheads and axes.

Memorial Gift from Dr. Wilbur Shankland, Odell, Illinois. He is descendant of Samuel B. Morse:

Two pink chairs.

Memorial Gift from Mrs. Kay Lyons:

Paperweight with picture of Old Mill with Jersey G. Whitson standing nearby.

Gift from Marian Shepherd Hurley, Savannah, Georgia:

Set of 4 painted china plates, painted by Ida Woodrow. Her identifying mark is on the back of the plates. The plates belonged to Mrs. Hurley's mother. Her mother was born in the Sheriff's residence at the County Jail facility while her father, Mr. Coe, was Sheriff. After Mr. Coe was out of the Sheriff's office, the family lived in the Jones House while their new home was built. Mrs. Hurley thought it fitting for the plates to return to the Jones House for display.

EAST BEDROOM

ITEMS PURCHASED BY SOCIETY:

ITEMS GIVEN TO THE SOCIETY:

Gift from Gladys Tuttle Jones (no relation to this Jones family):

Glove box made by Nelle Jones in 1908. Nelle was the adopted daughter of Henry C. and Mary Jones. Nelle gave the box to a little girl, Gladys, in 1921. Gladys lived at 508 E. Madison Street. She would walk past the Jones House and sometimes stop to visit with Nelle and swing on the porch swing. Gladys gave the glove box to the Society when she learned the house was being restored.

Gifts from Anne Vogelsinger:

Walnut (red stain) 4-drawer dresser with light brown marble top.
Mirror.

Covered screen.

Gift from Dr. Wilbur Shankland, St. Louis; he was related to the Col. Morse Family of Odell, Illinois. Col. Morse was descendant of Samuel B. Morse.

Walnut bed and counterpane.

Victorian Hat Box.

Elias Howe 1872 Sewing Machine; there is a sewing machine like this in the Smithsonian Institute in Washington D.C.

Gift from Alice Rachel Mies, Pontiac, Illinois:

Pillow covers.

Gift from Mrs. Jerome (Erma) Pearre, Pontiac, Illinois:

Antique Oriental rug.

Gifts from Mrs. Frances (Thelma) Asper, Pontiac, Illinois:

Godey prints.

Gifts from the Estate of Margery Martin, Odell, Illinois:

Rocking Chair.

Two whale oil lamps on mantle.

Gifts from Anne Pemberton:

Some items in hat box including at least one hat and shoes.

Gift from LeMessurier:

Red waist from Mary Dievendorf's grandmother.

Notice the wedding dresses on display. They are dark in color as white was not practical in a town with dirt streets and sidewalks. It was easier to

keep a dark colored dress clean. The bride also wanted a dress that she could wear more than on her wedding day. Often her wedding dress became her best dress for church, parties, and other special occasions. Sometimes a bride would choose to wear a black wedding dress if she was marrying a widower. By the 1870's more brides were wearing white dresses.

One window was bricked in at the time the house was built in order to create a closet. Possibly Mrs. Dehner wanted the modern convenience of a closet in her bedroom. From the outside you can see that it definitely was meant to be a window.

We have been told by someone who lived here at the time that the house was three apartments that this was the bedroom of the upstairs apartment.

WEST BEDROOM

This side of the upstairs may have been one large room when the house was originally built. At some time a wall was built to create two smaller rooms.

Notice the chamber pot under the bed.

At the time that the house was three apartments this was the living room area of the upstairs apartment.

CHILD'S ROOM

The green wicker child's rocker was made at the Illinois State Reformatory in the 1920's. It was used in the office of Doctors Middleton, Young, and Dargan at the first medical clinic in Pontiac.

The doll in the wicker rocker holds a beaded bag which belonged to John Hoerner, a Union soldier. He marched in a Victory Parade in Washington D.C. after the Civil War. He took the bag home to Pontiac and gave it to his daughter.

This room was divided into two parts while the house was an apartment house. To the East (left) of the window was the bathroom of the upstairs apartment. The kitchen was the remaining area which opened through the doorway into the living room.

Chapter 17

Unsolved Mysteries

Whenever historical research is performed, there are always mysteries that arise. The stories of the Dehner family and the Jones family also have their share of secrets. Some of these mysteries are shown below.

What was the cause of Death for Samuel Mooney?

Samuel Mooney died on April 5, 1836 at the age of 45 in Carroll County, Indiana. No cause of death information is available. His widow, Jane Mooney, married John Dehner.

How Did John Dehner Accumulate Enough Money to Buy Indiana Farmland?

As a relatively new immigrant to American, he had enough money to buy significant tracts of Indiana farmland. He must have saved the money he made in Prussia before he emigrated to America.

What Temptations did Joseph Dehner Face?

In the October 13, 1880, Sentinel article about the suicide of John Dehner in Missouri, there was a mention about his son facing temptations.

> His oldest son, Joe, caused him some financial trouble and worriness of mind later on in life, and some three year ago he removed his family to Missouri, hoping that Joe would do better if removed from his old temptations.

Some possible temptations that Joseph Dehner faced could include alcohol or gambling. No further information about these temptations is known to exist.

What was Dehner Hall and Where Was it Located in Pontiac?

Several historical documents mention a Dehner Hall in Pontiac. This could have been the business where John Dehner conducted his mercantile business. Unfortunately, the location of this building is unknown at this time.

Was John Dehner in business with E. R. Maples in 1863 in Pontiac?

Two different tokens are known to exist that indicate these two men were in business together in Pontiac in 1863. Unfortunately, no documentation has been found at this time which explains this business relationship.

Which Mr. Babcock Was in Business with Mr. Maples in 1868?

The 1868 invoice letterhead shown earlier indicates that Mr. Maples was no longer in business with John Dehner by 1868. It appears that Mr. Maples formed a partnership with R. W. Babcock by the time of the issuance of the 1868 Civil War tokens. More research is needed to verify it was R. W. Babcock versus other Babcocks that were living in Pontiac in the 1860s.

Which House is the Jones House in the 1869 Bird's Eye View of Pontiac

This illustration shows two houses on Madison Street between Locust and Walnut Street. The east house is relatively large and has three distinctive roof peaks on the south side of the house, similar to what the Jones House now has.

One can not see these three distinctive roof peaks on the south side of the Jones House because it is hidden by what is now the kitchen of the Jones House on the bird's eye view.

It is possible the artist put the three distinctive roof peaks on the wrong house. Trying to correctly find all the different architectural details for each house in Pontiac and then drawing them on one map had to be a daunting task in 1869.

Were There Big Porches Around the Jones House in the 1910 to 1923 Era?

The 1910 and 1923 Sanborn maps appear to show a small brick house with big porches on the sides of the house.

The circa 1977 photos of the Jones House before renovation in the application to add the house to the National Register do not show any evidence of these porches.

Who Were the Parents of Henry Jones?

The parents of Judge Henry Jones could not be identified. One of the challenges of searching old genealogical data is that Jones is too common of a last name.

The Fayette County, Indiana, courthouse has a copy of the 1831 marriage license for Judge Henry Jones. Unfortunately, this document does not identify the parents of Judge Henry Jones.

In the 1880 U.S. Census, Judge Henry Jones reported his father was born in New Jersey and his mother was born in Kentucky.

In the same 1880 Census, pioneer Charles Jones reported his father was born in New Jersey and his mother was also born in New Jersey. Both Judge Henry Jones and pioneer settler Charles Jones were both descended from the Jones tribe in New Jersey.

If the family tree of Judge Henry Jones could be expanded, it might explain whether or not he was related to Livingston County pioneer settler Charles Jones.

How Did Henry Jones Talk His Wife into Allowing Him to Go Gold Prospecting in California?

His wife had to take care of herself plus all the children while Henry Jones was gone to California. She coped by moving the family into the household of her parents while Henry was gone. One would speculate that it must have been difficult for Henry to convince his wife that he should go to California.

Did Judge Henry Jones Leave Pontiac and Go To California to Avoid Paying His Debts?

The 1989 Pantagraph article about tearing down the oldest brick structure in Pontiac included this information.

> His research [Robert Schlosser] shows that the building was built of bricks hauled to Pontiac from Bloomington, that Henry Jones and Edwin C. Jones (he could not find out if they were related) operated a store of some kind in the new brick structure, that Henry bought Edwin out in 1857, that he borrowed money for the buyout, that he borrowed money to pay off that loan, that he and a son left for California in 1859, and that second loan was never paid. The loan was foreclosed and John L. Turner bought the building the following year.

The property tax records at the Historic Courthouse in Pontiac indicate Judge Henry Jones paid the annual property taxes on the building at 315 W. Howard starting in 1856 and through 1860. He no longer owned the building in 1861 because J. P. James paid the 1861 property taxes.

The author does not know how to search for loans and mortgages that Judge Jones might have had in the 1850s.

The Historical Society has a Partial Abstract of Title for the Jones House from 1905 Through 1905. What Happened to the Older 1839 Through 1905 Portion of the Abstract?

This partial abstract is kept in a lock box at the Pontiac National Bank. The missing portion of the Abstract is not in the lock box. It must have gotten lost.

What Happened to All Three Children Adopted by Henry C. Jones?

In September of 1872, Henry C. Jones married Mary A. Bancroft in Pontiac. She was the daughter of Luther R. Bancroft (1814-1892) and Jane Wanzer (1812-1858). Henry C. Jones was 34 and Jane was 20 years of age when they married.

Ancestry.com reports that Henry and Mary Jones adopted three children. They adopted Charles Jones who was born around 1876. He is listed as living with Henry and Mary Jones in Dallas, Texas, in the 1880 U.S. Census. Details about his life, including his death date are unknown at this time.

Henry and Mary Jones adopted a daughter they named Helen M. Jones. Her birth date is unknown and she died on August 7, 1884, in Shasta, California. Her age and cause of death are unknown.

Henry and Mary Jones adopted another daughter they named Nellie A. Jones. Nellie married Roy Hershey and their genealogical information is known.

Why did Gerald Laurence Maxwell move to Pontiac and Live with Minister Roy Hershey in the Jones House in 1950?

One possible explanation is that Gerald Maxwell had a stressful life and the minister agreed to let him live with him. Gerald lost his father when he was four years old and his mother then married three more times.

Were There Two Different Henry Jones Living in Pontiac in the 1850s?

Robert A. Schlosser, in his 1985 booklet The Genealogy of the Jones House, argued that there were two different men living in Pontiac in the 1850s with the same name of Henry Jones.

> The Jones, for whom the house is named, is the late Henry C. Jones who purchased the property in August of 1899, about five months before the turn of this century. The father of this Henry Jones was also named Henry Jones, and in the early records of this area there was still another Henry Jones, giving us three men named Henry Jones to research. The last mentioned Henry Jones preceded the other two, so he becomes the first Henry Jones in this work. The father of Henry C. shall be listed as the second Henry Jones. And Henry C. becomes the third. The starting point for the history in this report is the 1850 census of Livingston County. At The Pontiac Public Library, census records for. Livingston County are on microfilm beginning with the year 1840.

Mr. Schlosser argued there were three different men with the same name of Henry Jones and he identified them as follows.

Number One This Henry Jones died before the other two men.
His birth date is unknown.
He died in 1854 in Pontiac.

Number Two In this book, this man is called Judge Henry Jones (1812-1893).

Number Three In this book, this man is called Henry C. Jones (1838-1921)

In the 1985 booklet, Mr. Schlosser continued his theory that there were three different men with the name of Henry Jones.

> In the 1850 Census of Livingston County, the census entries for the village of Pontiac are found on page one. In 1850, according to that census, Pontiac had five dwellings, consisting of one hotel and four residences, and a total population of twenty-seven persons. 06. A mile or so east of the village of Pontiac, back in 1850, the census enumerator found eight people living in dwelling number seven, for which Charles Jones, age 52, is shown as the householder.
>
> I did a bit of research on Charles Jones.1 Charles, a farmer and a harness maker, lost his first wife in 1841. In September of 1843, Charles Jones became a County Commissioner and he was re-elected in 1846. In 1849, he married a widow named Rebecca Popejoy and with that marriage came a few Popejoys. In the Charles Jones household, in 1850, we find his new wife, Rebecca, age 44, and their baby boy named Charles, Jr., and twenty year old Joseph T. Jones, probably a nephew.
>
> The other four persons in the household were: Elizabeth R. Popejoy, age 42; Susan Popejoy, 18; Andrew Popejoy, 15; and Martin Popejoy, age 10. Apparently, Elizabeth R. Popejoy was a spinster aunt to the three Popejoy children. 07. In October of 1850, just two months after the taking of the census, Joseph T. Jones married Susan Popejoy.
>
> About two years later, in August of 1852, Henry Jones, the father of Joseph, and our number one Henry Jones, married Elizabeth R. Popejoy; thus, both son and father had found brides in the household in which the son had been a resident, and the son now had a new stepmother.
>
> In the 1878 history, on page 260, we learn that in September of 1847, this Henry Jones and two other men, J. H. DeMoss and Philip Rollings, were

awarded a four hundred and fifty dollar contract to build a bridge3 where the present Mill Street bridge now stands.

On that same page of history, we also learn that, in March of 1849, high water did considerable damage to the new bridge. 08. This first Henry Jones served as a County Commissioner4 in 1848 and 1849. In 1851, this Henry and a partner formed, east of Pontiac, the short-lived town of Richmond.

The probate record for Henry Jones indicates that Henry died in September of 1854. The survivors, Elizabeth R. (Popejoy) Jones, the widow; and Joseph T. Jones, the only offspring; requested the appointment of Thomas A. Jones, a brother of the deceased, as administrator of the estate.

This ends the account of the first Henry Jones of record in this area. There is a possibility, however, that this Henry Jones was related to Charles Jones, and there is a possibility that both of them were related to the second Henry Jones.

Further investigation using Ancestry.com found the Henry Jones that Mr. Schlosser identified as the Number One Henry Jones was likely the son of pioneer settler Charles S. Jones. According to Ancestry.com, this Henry Jones was born in 1829 and he died in 1854. Ancestry.com also shows that this Henry Jones did marry Elizabeth Popejoy (1838-1920).

Further investigation is required to validate that the Number One Henry Jones really was the son of pioneer settler Charles S. Jones. Because Jones is such a common last name, it is very difficult to verify family relationships.

CHAPTER 18

Closing Thoughts

Before researching and writing this book about the Jones House, the author wrote books about the Strevell and Yost Houses. The Strevell House story primarily involved just the Jason Strevell family. The Yost House story involved two generations of the same family. This book about the Jones House was more difficult than the other two books because it involved two separate families (the Dehner and the Jones families). Another complicating factor was that Jones is such a common last name in America.

John Dehner was very successful in the early portion of his life. He was worth $936,000 in today's dollars by 1860. He established and ran a very successful dry goods mercantile business in Pontiac. He served in Livingston County government offices including serving as Township Supervisor for four years. He helped to build the first Livingston County Jail. John Dehner served as an officer in the early Livingston County Fairs.

John Dehner tried to improve Pontiac by successfully getting the Chicago & Paducah as a second railroad for the county. He tried but was unsuccessful in getting a new state mental asylum to be built in Pontiac.

Unfortunately, John Dehner's life deteriorated in his later years. He suffered some business losses and moved to Missouri. His only child, a son, experienced difficulties in his life. John Dehner's wife died before he did and that loss adversely affected his mind. John Dehner ended up taking poison and committing suicide in a Missouri hotel signed in under a false name.

Judge Henry Jones and his son, Henry C. Jones, both led successful lives. Henry Jones ran a successful business in Pontiac. Henry Jones helped build the first bridge over the Vermilion River in 1847. He was elected a County Commissioner in 1848. In 1851, Henry Jones and Henry Loveless laid out the town of Richmond, just east of Pontiac. Unfortunately the railroad missed Richmond by just two miles, and Richmond became a ghost town.

Around 1856, Henry Jones and his business partner, Edwin Charles Jones, built the first brick structure in Livingston County at 315 W. Howard Street. Henry Jones was elected to be a Livingston County Judge. After making three journeys to the California gold fields, Judge Henry Jones stayed in California. He became a pioneer settler in Shasta, California.

Henry C. Jones was involved with several businesses including the Pontiac Sentinel newspaper, the first electric light plant in Pontiac, and the first artificial ice company in Pontiac. He also lived in Texas and sold supplies to many different newspapers.

Henry C. Jones eventually married and moved into the Jones House at 314 E. Madison Street around 1900. His father, Judge Henry Jones helped to build the first brick structure

in Pontiac around 1856, and his son, Henry C. Jones lived in the oldest brick house in Pontiac built in 1858.

Unfortunately, the oldest brick structure in Livingston County that Henry Jones built at 315 W. Howard St. was torn down in 1989.

The oldest brick house in Pontiac at 314 E. Madison Street was severely damaged by a major fire in 1975. This house was saved from the wrecking ball when Francis E. Leman and Reid Tombaugh bought the house in 1976. Through the efforts and donations from countless citizens and civic organizations, the Jones House was fully restored. Every year, many residents and visitors enjoy touring this fascinating pre-Civil War brick home.

References

All references used in this story were identified at the point they were used in the story.

Recommended Reading

Livingston County Historical Society: It's Beginning and Some Later Updates by Dale C. Maley.

Abraham Lincoln and the Strevell Family of Pontiac, Illinois by Dale C. Maley.

The Zoath Yost Family of Pontiac, Illinois by Dale C. Maley.

Websites

Most of the rare documents found in doing research for this book were uploaded to Archive.Org. One can search that website using the search term “Pontiac + Illinois” to find these documents. All documents may be viewed or downloaded from this website.

Author Spotlight

Dale C. Maley

One of Dale's hobbies is history, including the history of Fairbury, Illinois. Dale has written over 20 books on Fairbury and Livingston County history. He has also written over 250 history stories for the Fairbury Blade newspaper and FairburyNews.Net. He has given many history lectures to various community groups in Livingston and Ford Counties. Dale is President of the Livingston County Historical Society and is Vice-President of the Fairbury Echoes Museum. Both Dale and his wife are 5th generation citizens of Fairbury.

Also by Dale C. Maley

Livingston County History Books

- Abraham Lincoln and the Strevell Family of Pontiac, Illinois
- Coal Mining in Fairbury, Illinois
- Fairbury History Stories: Volume One
- Fairbury, Illinois Book Authors
- Fairbury, Illinois in 1888
- Fairbury, Illinois in the Civil War
- Fairbury, Illinois and the 1893 Chicago Columbian Exposition
- Fairbury, Illinois, from Prehistoric Times to Modern Times
- Fairbury, Illinois in the World Wars
- Franklin Oliver – Pioneer Settler of Livingston County, Illinois
- History of Murders Committed in Fairbury, Illinois
- Honeggers of Fairbury, Illinois
- Livingston County Historical Society: It's Beginning and Some Later Updates
- The Founding of Fairbury, Illinois
- The Goudy Brothers of Fairbury, Illinois
- The Great Chatsworth Train Wreck of 1887
- The Kring Family of Fairbury, Illinois
- The McDowell Family of Fairbury, Illinois

- The Zoath Yost Family of Pontiac, Illinois
- Walton Bros. Of Fairbury, Illinois
- William T. Stackpole of Fairbury, Illinois
- William T. Stackpole's 1849 Journey from Illinois to the California Gold Fields